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THE AFGHAN - IRANIAN CONFLICT OVER HERAT PROVINCE AND  
EUROPEAN INTERVENTION 1796 - 1863: A REINTERPRETATION

*The University of Texas at Austin*

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THE AFGHAN - IRANIAN CONFLICT OVER HERAT PROVINCE  
AND EUROPEAN INTERVENTION 1796 - 1863: A  
REINTERPRETATION

by

DAVID CHARLES CHAMPAGNE, B.A., M.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Austin  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

August, 1981

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1981



THE AFGHAN - IRANIAN CONFLICT OVER HERAT PROVINCE  
AND EUROPEAN INTERVENTION 1796 - 1863: A  
REINTERPRETATION

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This work is dedicated to the people of Afghanistan, who are once again struggling to maintain their independence in the aftermath of an invasion by a 20th century imperial power.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are numerous people I would like to thank for encouraging me to write this dissertation, especially Dr. Hafez F. Farmayan, who constantly and generously guided my study towards my Ph.D. as my main academic advisor, and Dr. Gail Minault who has contributed greatly with suggestions, criticism, and moral support to the improvement of this dissertation. I would also like to thank Dr. Michael Hillmann, a member of the dissertation committee, whose dedication to the study of Persian literature helped me gain an increased appreciation for Persian, as well as my first publication, and Dr. Pat Kruppa who assisted me with preparations for my major orals and as a member of the dissertation committee.

A special word of appreciation must also be given to the Director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Mr. Thomas E. Gouttierre, who has encouraged my work and made it possible for me to return to England and Afghanistan in 1978 to conduct research. I would also like to thank the numerous Afghans with whom I lived and worked during my three years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan, who helped me gain insights into Afghan society which

might not otherwise have been possible.

I want to offer thanks to those Afghans both in Afghanistan and the United States who have read all or parts of my dissertation and who offered their criticism, especially Professors Hasan Kawun Kakar and Rahim El Ham of Kabul University, and to the ex-governor of Herat and Minister without Portfolio, Ghulam Ali Ayeen, who is now a Research Associate at the Center for Afghanistan Studies in Omaha.

A special thanks is also in order to Professor Jack Shroder and Mr. Scott Robinson of the University of Nebraska at Omaha Geography/Geology Department for production of the maps and tables for this dissertation.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staffs of the India Office Library, the British Museum, the Foreign Office Library, the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission, and the London House in London, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and the Sheepscar Library at Leeds, England for their kind assistance.

I would also like to thank Mrs. Linda B. Masters whose stylistic and editorial criticisms and typing skills greatly facilitated the completion of this dissertation.

I would like to express appreciation to The University of Texas at Austin and the State of Texas for pro-

viding quality graduate education at minimal costs and scholarships to someone who otherwise would never have had the opportunity to broaden his mind and experience in such an academic setting.

I would also like to thank the Iran-America Foundation, Austin, Texas, for a grant which helped me complete my research.

Last, and most of all, I would like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to my wife Mary--friend, confidant, and companion, who has unselfishly shared with me the joys and sorrows of Afghanistan, graduate school, and life--and to my children, Tamim, Margaret, and Christopher, who have kept me working late into the night.

Any faults or errors in this dissertation are solely those of the author.

## PREFACE

One of the least studied questions in Middle Eastern historical research is that of the nature of the political association between Qājār Iran, on the western Iranian highlands, and the Durrānī Afghan domain on the eastern Iranian highlands, from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Many Iranian nationalists contend that most of the eastern Iranian highlands (where modern Afghanistan is located) was an integral part of Iran until 1857, when England took it from the Iranians.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, many Afghan nationalists make an equally fallacious assumption, that "Afghanistan" was never part of Iran.<sup>3</sup>

Numerous Middle Eastern scholars are undecided about the relationship between the eastern and western sections of the Iranian highlands from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Part of the reason lies in the tendency for western historians to concentrate their studies on the power struggle between Britain and Russia in Central Asia. The notion that Iran and "Afghanistan" were pawns in the "great game" for control of Central Asia has produced several generations of historians in the Sir Percy Sykes tradition, who viewed, and still view events on the highlands during this period from their own Eurocentric

perspective. This Eurocentric approach, however, does not account for the regional socio-political situation on the highlands during this period.

This dissertation focuses on this regional conflict between the Qājār dynasty of the western Iranian highlands and the Durrānī Afghan domain of the eastern Iranian highlands over control of the eastern section, and specifically Herat Province, the area of impact between 1796 and 1863 in the struggle for dominance. This is a study of a power struggle between two different groups, some of whose ancestors at various times were part of the same political unit--the Safavid Empire. This dissertation is as much a study of the perceptions of the regional antagonists concerning their own rights of political control as it is a description and analysis of the events and personalities which created the "Herat question."

In undertaking this task it is necessary first to define several terms that will be used. The terms Iranians and Afghans are not used in their current connotations meaning the citizens of the modern nation states. Iranian will refer to those people who inhabited the western Iranian highlands and who either gave their allegiance to or submitted to the rule of the Safavids and later the Qājārs. Afghan signifies the Pushtun tribal peoples who inhabited the eastern Iranian highlands and specifically to members

of the Abdālī and Ghalzay tribal groups who dominated there. During the period of rule by the Safavids, the inhabitants of the eastern highlands did not continuously submit to western Iranian authority. The word Afghanistan refers to that area, which in the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries made up the Durrānī sultanate. Iran is defined as that territory first under the hegemony of the Safavids and later the area under the Qājārs. These appellations were dependent on the political fortunes of the rulers of the highlands.

The historical and cultural association of the eastern and western sections of the Iranian highlands has always been complex. Inhabitants of both sections have much the same culture and heritage. But while their cultural and political heritage was interwoven it was not identical. The inhabitants of the eastern highlands maintained stronger ties with Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Merchants, travelers, Islamic proselytizers, and settlers from the eastern highlands found the subcontinent fertile for their ambitions. Afghan dynasties ruled parts of northern India during the period of the Delhi sultanate. The eastern highlands were the center of different Islamic dynasties from the western highlands. The conditions which resulted in the conflict between the Qājārs and



Durrānīs in the nineteenth century had their historical roots in developments on the Iranian highlands after the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The creation of an Islamic national state by Shāh Ismā'īl Safavī, during the first two decades of the sixteenth century ushered in a new era for the inhabitants of the Iranian highlands. Under the banner of a militant Iṣnā 'Asharī Shi'ism the Safavids tried, with relative success, to recreate in an Islamic mold the old Iranian empire of the Sassanians. With the eventual establishment of the Safavid state a renewed sense of cultural and political identity emerged. Iṣnā 'Asharī Shi'ism, as well as a common cultural heritage, helped Shāh Ismā'īl recreate a separate political entity on the highlands. The new kingdom became an empire and reached its apex during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās I (1587-1620), encompassing most of the territory between the Tigris River in the west and the Būlan Pass in the east. The Safavid Empire endured for over two hundred years.

The inhabitants of the eastern section of the highlands, however, never fully shared in the creation, growth, or maintenance of this empire. Their territories were split into two buffer zones: one insulating the central core of the Safavid state and the western highlands, serv-

ing as protection from invasion or destruction by the Mughal Empire of India; the remainder of the area forming a buffer zone for the Mughals, safeguarding them from the Safavids. The vast majority of the inhabitants of the Safavid buffer zone, though proselytized, were not forcibly converted to Shi'ism, which was the official state religion of the Safavids. The Safavids therefore considered these Sunnī subjects heretics, and denied them political power in their part of the empire. But while the western section of the highlands coalesced into a semi-national state with a common culture and religion, the eastern highlands, inhabited largely by Sunnī tribal and sedentary people maintained a separate identity and subservient political status. When the empire collapsed the eastern section broke away, forming a new political structure. It is this conflict over the absorption and maintenance of Herat Province as part of the Durrānī domain with which this dissertation is mainly concerned.

The Durrānīs did not consider themselves heirs to the Safavids as did the Qājārs. In fact, they had no quarrel with the Qājārs over control of most of the western highlands. They were a tribal people with a different background, sectarian and social code, who maintained their separate state on the eastern highlands. While the Qājārs

founded their kingdom on the western highlands on part of the ruins of the vast Safavid Empire, the Afghans had done the same earlier in the area of the Safavid and Mughal buffer zones, and believed that neither could claim the other's territory. The first Durrānī ruler, Aḥmad Shāh, intentionally maintained a buffer area of his own between the Durrānī sultanate and the western highlands to make sure the Iranians would not interfere in his territory. Moreover, the Afghans did not look on themselves as Iranians. To them, an Iranian was a resident of the western highlands, a native Persian speaker, and a Shī'ah. A Durrānī, on the other hand, was a member of the Abdālī Pushtun tribe, a native Pushtu speaker, a resident of the eastern highlands, and a Sunnī. Of course, many of the residents of the eastern highlands were not Durrānīs, Pushtu speakers, or even tribal peoples, but either gave their allegiance or submitted to Durrānī rule, and usually supported the Durrānīs in their conflicts with the Qājārs. The major unifying factor among these peoples seemed to be that they were residents of the eastern highlands and Sunnīs in religion. The small number of Shī'ahs who lived in the eastern highlands divided their loyalties between the Durrānīs and the Qājārs.

The original Qājār scheme to reincorporate Herat

Province and the rest of the eastern highlands into Iran and the Durrānī opposition had nothing to do with European rivalry or international politics. The political situation which had developed on the Iranian highlands after the collapse of the Safavid Empire was regional in nature.

Any discussion about the "Herat question" and the significance of the confrontation between the Qājārs and the Durrānī Afghans over the Province of Herat from 1796 to 1863 requires an understanding of the situation in the Iranian highlands during this period. The roles played by non-Iranians or non-Afghan elements in the scenario which developed were secondary. The notion that the Afghan kingdom was the pawn in the "great game" between the European powers fails to take into account the regional issues that were, for the most part, settled on the Iranian highlands, where they were spawned.

The development of Durrānī separatism is discussed in Chapter I of this dissertation, which traces the events and reasons for the development of a separate state in the eastern highlands from the rise of the Safavids until the beginnings of Qājār rule. This chapter attempts to present in a concise and comprehensive manner, the circumstances which brought about the creation of the regional antagonism between the two sections of the highlands. This chapter

aids the reader in understanding the forces behind the creation and maintenance of the Durrānī kingdom which formed the basis for the conflict between the Qājārs and the Durrānīs.

Chapter II deals with the early years of Qājār rule in the western highlands, the slow collapse of the Durrānī kingdom, the beginnings of European involvement in the regional struggle, and the Iranian and Afghan responses.

Chapter III continues the discussion of the attempts by the Qājārs to conquer a portion of the eastern highlands--Herat Province, from 1818-1836. It also deals with events in Afghanistan that influenced this conflict, as well as the roles played by European powers and their perceptions of the struggle.

Chapter IV covers the Qājār attack against Herat in 1837, the parts played by the Russians and the British, and the repercussions.

Chapter V begins with the retreat of Muḥammad Shāh from Herat in 1838 and the issuance of the Simla Manifesto. It discusses how the British attempts to place a Sadūzay Afghan on the throne in Kābul affected the Durrānīs and Qājārs.

Chapter VI discusses Herat Province under Yār

Muḥammad Khān, from 1843 to 1851, and his relationships with his Qājār rivals in Tehran and his Bārakzay Afghan rivals in Kābul.

Chapter VII describes the ramifications of the rule of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān in Herat and Herat's political alignment.

Chapter VIII explains the reason behind the Iranian occupation of Herat in 1857 and the response of the Durrānīs, British, and Russians.

Chapter IX discusses the political alignment of Herat after the Treaty of Paris of 1857, ending the Anglo-Persian War, and the various roles played by the Qājārs, Afghans, and British in Herat's reabsorption into the Durrānī state.

Chapter X is a conclusion, summarizing and analyzing the conflict between the Durrānīs and the Iranians in the highlands.

#### Notes on Sources

The sources available to one undertaking this study are many and diverse. Iranian, Afghan, British, French, and some Russian sources, both primary and secondary exist. Several chronicles written by nineteenth century Iranian scholars come to mind: 'Abd'al Razzaq Dunbulī's Ma'athir-i Sulṭānīyah, printed in 1826 in Tabrīz under the patronage

of 'Abbās Mīrzā and later translated by Sir Harford Jones Brydges, and two works commissioned by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh Salāṭīn-i Qājārīyah by Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Ṣīpihr Lisān al-Mulk, and Riḏā Qulī Khān Hidāyat's addition to Mīr Khvand's Rawzat al-Ṣafā, which deals with the Qājārs. Also of importance is the Fārsnāmah-i Naṣīrī by Ḥasan-i Fasai. In addition, there are numerous secondary sources in Persian by Iranian scholars, which give information on Iran and Afghanistan, including Maḥmūd Maḥmūd's Tārīkh-i Ravābit-i Siyāsī-yi Īrān va Inglīs dar Qarn-i Nūzdahum-i Miladī, and Aḥmad Tavakkulī's Ravābit-i Siyāsī-yi Īrān va Afghānistān.

Afghan historians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have also produced a number of valuable works, including Tārīkh-i Sulṭānī by Sulṭān Maḥmūd Durrānī, and Sirāj al-Tavārīkh by Fayz Muḥammad Hazārah. Later works by Said Qāsim Rishtiya, Afghānistān dar Qarn-i Nūzdah, Tīmūr Shāh by 'Azīz al-Dīn Fūlfalzay, and Afghānistān dar Masīr-i Tārīkh by Mīr Ghulām Muḥammad Ghubar, have been examined.

Most of the primary source material used in this dissertation, however, comes from the unpublished records of the India Office Library, the Public Records Office, the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission, and the

British Museum in London, England. Other materials read were found at the Sheepscar Library in Leeds, and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The author has made an attempt to locate and use as many of the diplomatic records as possible which specifically deal with the relationship between the Qājārs and Durrānīs. The Records of the British Legation in Tehran, on file in the India Office, contain thousands of previously unpublished letters and reports from Iranians and Afghans to the British Government and to each other, elaborating on their positions in regard to the question of political control in the eastern highlands. Some of these records are the actual correspondences in Persian, but most are translations of the Persian letters and reports made in Tehran or India for the benefit of the Foreign Office in London or the Governor-General in India. The important point about these Iranian and Afghan correspondences is that they tell the "other side of the story" and have been previously discounted, not used, or ignored by most historians who deal with the early Qājār period. Thus not only are they primary sources, but also material originating from non-European sources.

The Broughton Papers at the British Museum have been helpful as they give an insight into Lord Palmerston's view of the conflict in Central Asia as well as an under-



standing of his prejudices towards Iranians, Afghans, and non-Europeans in general. Count Gobineau's (French) diplomatic dispatches aided this study, but the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris still need to be examined. Additional material available in London, Paris, Tehran, Kābul, Moscow, and New Delhi has not been consulted due to lack of funding.

#### Technical Considerations

The transliteration system used in this dissertation for Persian proper and place names is that presently used by the Library of Congress. The same system is also used for Pushtu and Arabic words. The only exceptions are spellings in the text of the following: Tehran, Lahore, Erivan, Herat, Georgia, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, and the Tigris River.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The nature of the problem can be seen in the following two differing views related to the subject. Peter Avery, Modern Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), p. 35, states that Herat (the city) had been an Afghan city only from the first part of the nineteenth century. Actually the city as well as the Province of Herat became part of the Durrānī Afghan kingdom in 1750. Marshall Hodgson, The Venture of Islam 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. III, fails to deal with the eastern section of the Iranian highlands during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in a significant manner. He refers to Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī as "King Abdali" of Kabul and does not mention the existence of the Durrānī sultanate or its effects in the eastern Iranian highlands and the Indian subcontinent.

<sup>2</sup>Aḥmad Tavakkulī, Afghānistān: Ravābit-i Siyāsī yi Īrān va Afghānistān (Tih-rān: Chāpkhānah-i Mihr, 1948), p. 41, claims that Herat Province was separated from Iran only by the Treaty of Paris in 1857, ignoring the fact that Herat Province had been part of a separate Durrānī domain for one hundred years prior to the signing of the Paris treaty between Qājār Īrān and Great Britain. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ed., Historical Atlas of Iran (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1975), Plate 24; in the legend of this plate it implies that half of modern Afghanistan became separated from Īrān only because of the Treaty of Paris of 1857. This irredentist view ignores historical evidence.

<sup>3</sup>Mohammed Ali, Afghanistan: Land of Glorious Past and Bright Future (Kābul: Franklin Press, 1966), uses the term "Afghanistan" in such a way as to imply that the country has existed since ancient times and is not a creation of Safavī and post-Safavī times. He tends to confuse the term "Afghānistān" with "Khurāsān".

<sup>4</sup>Marshall Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, 3 vols., II:17 and 227; and Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), II: 329-333, do not discuss the regional circumstances leading to the conflict in the eastern highlands and tend to dwell on European involvement in the area.

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## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE REGIONAL CONFLICT OVER HERAT PROVINCE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

#### Khurāsān

Herat, Qandahār, and other provinces in the eastern Iranian highlands make up the area known as Khurāsān.<sup>1</sup> According to the ancient Persian proverb, Khurāsān was the oyster shell of the world and Herat its pearl.<sup>2</sup> From Khurāsān came the Iranian dissidents who in 750 A.D. overthrew the Arab Umayyad dynasty. Khurāsān was also the home of many Iranian poets and scholars, including Firdawsī, the great Iranian poet who authored the national epic, the Shāhnāmāh.<sup>3</sup> It was also the center of such Irano-Turkic dynasties as the Saffarids, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, and Timurids who held power in the eastern Islamic world.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Khurāsān with the rest of the Iranian highlands were in a state of political upheaval because of conflicts between various tribal groups, all contending for political dominance. By the late eighteenth century, the conflict centered on Herat, which became the battleground for two new dynasties on the Iranian highlands--in the east, the Durrānī sultanate of



the Abdālī Pushtuns, and in the west, the Iranian dynasty of the Qājār Turks, which had succeeded the Safavids. This conflict for political control of Herat was rooted in the religious and cultural history of the people of Khurāsān, and particularly of Herat and Qandahār provinces.

### The City and Province of Herat

The city of Herat (Figure 1) in the northwest of the modern state of Afghanistan sits on a fertile plain between two mountain ranges which form part of the Hīndū Kūsh complex.<sup>4</sup> North of Herat are the Safīd Kūh, and to the south are the Siyāh Kūh. Through the valley formed by these mountains flows the Harī River, known in Persian as the Harī Rūd, which runs westerly past Herat for about fifty miles and then changes course, flowing almost directly north along the modern border between eastern Iran and western Afghanistan. The city of Herat, situated within three miles of the Harī Rūd, is nourished by its water. In the hot season, from May until October, there is a strong steady wind which blows from the northwest with such regularity that it is referred to by the inhabitants as the "bad-i sad va bīst rūz"--the one hundred twenty day wind.<sup>5</sup> Winters are cold and dry, often with temperatures below freezing.

For the last eight hundred years Herat has been an important city on the Iranian highlands and a much sought-

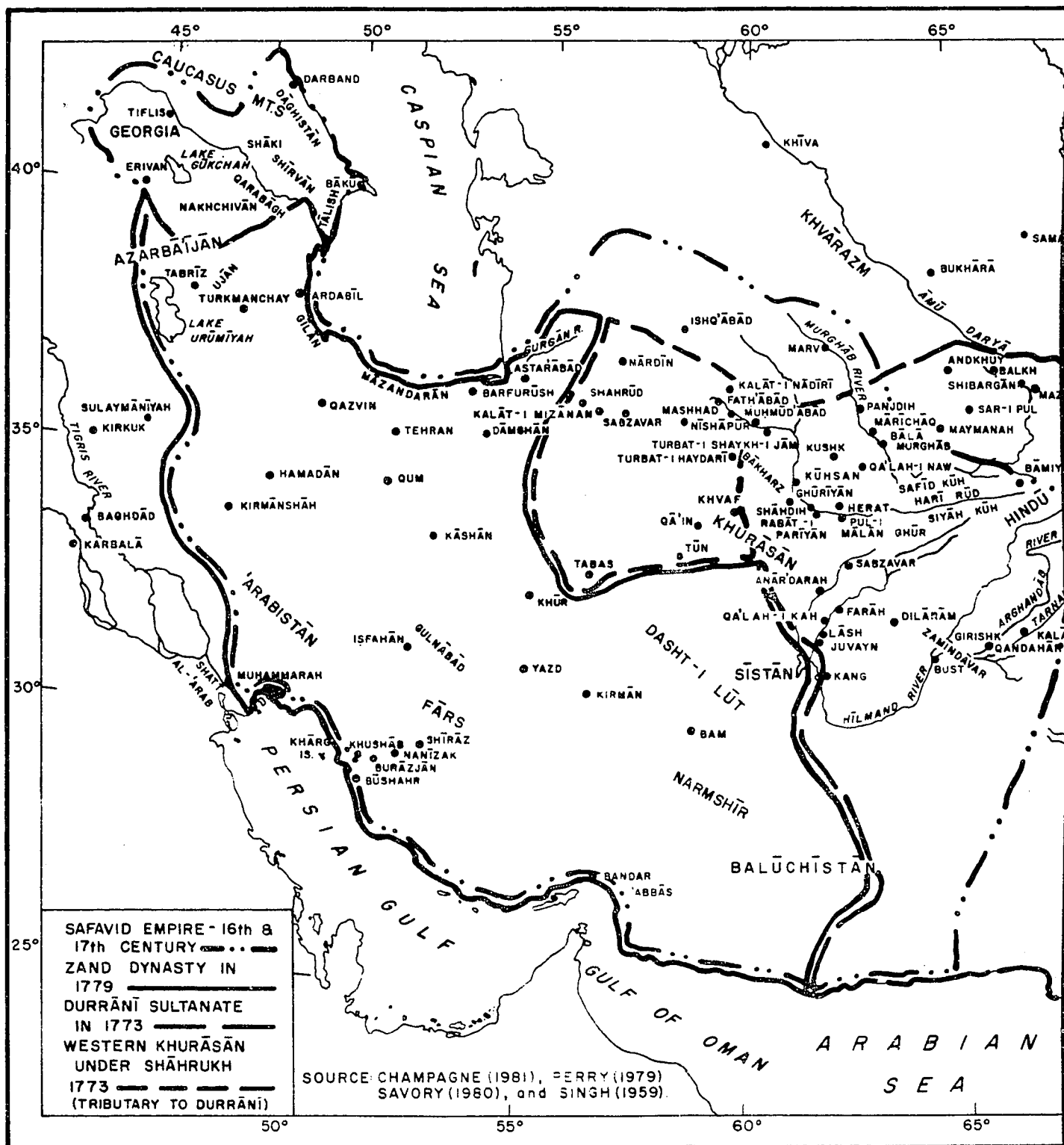


FIGURE 1



after prize. During the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta, the great Muslim geographer, visited the city and extolled its fame.<sup>6</sup> Five hundred years later it was called "The Granary and Garden of Central Asia" in G. B. Malleson's monograph.<sup>7</sup> Though Malleson was overstating the case, the renown of Herat cannot be seriously questioned, and more than one conqueror made it his target. Changiz Khān sacked the city in the thirteenth century, and in 1381 Tīmūr-i Lang likewise plundered it. He slaughtered thousands of people in the area and reportedly had their skulls stacked in piles. He carried the gates of the city to Samarkand and forced artists, poets, and craftsmen to follow him to his capital.

Somehow the city survived, owing to the fertility of the surrounding land and its location on one of the main crossroads of Central Asian trade.<sup>8</sup> The goods of China, India, Bukhārā, and Qandahār continued to pass through its portals en route to the markets of Shīrāz, Iṣfahān, Baghdād, Damascus, Constantinople and the cities of Europe. Herat was somewhat abetted in its recovery from such catastrophes due to the patronage of its conquerors. Shāhrukh (1404-1447), Tīmūr-i Lang's son, made Herat his capital and possibly out of remorse for his father's deeds made the city flower again, attracting artists, poets, and men of letters from all over the Islamic world.<sup>9</sup>

Herat's greatest period as a literary, cultural, and commercial center occurred under one of its last Timurid rulers, Mīrzā Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (1476-1505), one of Tīmūr-i Lang's grandsons. He was a writer and poet himself and encouraged others to write. The poets Amīr 'Alī Shir Nava'i and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī both resided in Herat. Calligraphy, gilding, painting, and page illumination thrived under Tīmūr-i Lang's grandson. The famous Persian miniature painter Kamāl al-Dīn Bihzād lived and worked in Herat. His pupils were patronized by the courts at Delhi and at Iṣfahān.<sup>10</sup> Herat's renaissance lasted about thirty-five years and made an enduring contribution to Iranian culture. In 1705 Herat fell to Shaybānī Khān, a Central Asian Uzbek chief, ending the reign of the Timurids. But Shaybānī Khān was unable to maintain authority over his new acquisition, and the city retained its prominence as one of the main entrepôts of the international caravan routes.

The Province of Herat, from the time of the Safavids through the late nineteenth century, comprised the southern section of the Murghāb Basin in the north, including the towns of Bālā Murghāb, Mūrīchāq, Panjdih, and Kushk. The cities of Ghūr and Farāh marked its southern extent. In the northwest, the province stretched to Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām, and to the southwest to the town of Tūn on the edge of the Dasht-i Lūt (Figure 1).<sup>11</sup>

The provincials were mainly Tajiks, Pushtuns, Turkmens, Uzbeks, and Aimaqs, with small minorities of Hindus and Jews.<sup>12</sup> The Hindus and Jews were usually money lenders or merchants who sold their wares in the bazaar.<sup>13</sup> The Farsi speaking Tajiks, called Harātīs, the ancient inhabitants of Herat, were not a tribal group. They were simply an extension of the city-dwelling population of Khurāsān.<sup>14</sup> Their adherence to Shi'ism set them apart from Tajiks of the countryside, who along with Pushtuns, Turkmens, Uzbeks and nomadic Aimaqs were Sunnī Muslims.<sup>15</sup> The religious differences between the urban Hārātīs and the more rural ethnic and tribal groups were frequently a source of conflict over control of the province and were partly responsible for the continuous struggle in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries between Shī'ah Iranians and the Sunnī Pushtuns.

#### The City and Province of Qandahār

Qandahār, located between the Tarnak and the Arghandāb Rivers, lies to the south and east of Herat (Figure 1). The name may derive from Gandhara, an ancient Indian kingdom located in what is now northeastern Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan, or from Iskandaria (Alexandria). The city has been known as Qandahār from at least the thirteenth century. The region around Qandahār since Safavid times has been called the Province of Qandahār.

During the Safavid period the province extended northwest to the borders of Herat Province and east to about the Būlan Pass (Figure 1).<sup>16</sup>

Afghans of many different tribes made up the majority of the population of Qandahār. The most powerful tribe in and around the city of Qandahār was the Ghalzay who had migrated into the area.<sup>17</sup> The Ghalzays were not true Pushtuns but descendants of a non-Indo-European group who had lived with the Afghans so long that they adopted their language and customs.<sup>18</sup> Ancestors of the Ghalzay tribe had ruled much of northern India.<sup>19</sup>

#### The Safavids

The Safavid dynasty came to power on the western Iranian highlands in the first few years of the sixteenth century. The founder of the Safavid state, Ismā'īl I (1499-1524) used Shi'ism as a rallying point in forming the dynasty. With the aid of his Turkmen troops (Qizilbash) he conquered Iran. By designating Iṣnā 'Asharī Shi'ism as the state religion, Ismā'īl and his followers added a characteristic to what it was to be Iranian: Shi'ism in the highlands became synonymous with being Iranian. Those areas where a majority of the inhabitants were Shī'ah or were forced to convert to Shi'ism were the core of the Safavid state; non-Shī'ah areas formed frontiers and were sources of insurrection. Shi'ism spread by conversion and

military force throughout the western Iranian highlands, while the majority of people in the Caucasus and the eastern Iranian highlands maintained their own religions.<sup>20</sup> When Ismā'īl entered the city of Herat in 1510, he forcibly converted many of its inhabitants to Iṣnā 'Asharī Shi'ism.<sup>21</sup> The city marked the eastern extent of his forced conversions.

The Safavids intended Herat to become the second most important city in their empire. Ismā'īl proclaimed it the home of the valī 'ahd, the crown prince.<sup>22</sup> There was lack of agreement, and as a result, Herat lost its prestige as capital of a dynasty and the "pearl" of Khurāsān.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Ismā'īl sent many of its artists and craftsmen, including Kamāl al-Dīn Bihzād, the great Persian miniaturist, to his own capital at Qazvin and transferred the seat of government of Khurāsān to the Shī'ah holy city Mashhad.<sup>24</sup> He and his descendants subsidized the development of Mashhad at the expense of Herat. During the first twenty-six years of Safavid control in Herat, the Uzbeks sacked it on several occasions. Though the Safavids always brought order to the city, Herat became a garrison city instead of a major political or cultural center. Without royal patronage Herat no longer produced artists, poets, and scholars of great renown. The government's concentration on Mashhad left Herat isolated far from the center of



the Safavid Empire on the western Iranian highlands. But because Herat was favorably located on the caravan routes, the city maintained its commercial importance.<sup>25</sup>

### The Abdālī Afghans

Under these conditions, the Abdālī Afghan connection with the city of Herat grew. The Safavids used the Abdālīs to protect their caravans passing between Herat and the city of Qandahār. The Safavids reciprocated by protecting the Afghans from the ravages of the Uzbeks.<sup>26</sup>

The Abdālīs were only one of the many Afghan tribes whose original homeland was in the Sulaymān Mountains northeast of Qandahār. How long they lived in the vicinity of the city is unknown, but they may have inhabited the Sulaymān region since the great Persian Achaemenid empire (550-330 B.C.).<sup>27</sup> Their traditional territory in the eighteenth century stretched east to northwest between the cities of Qandahār and Herat, south to the areas occupied by the Baluchi tribes, and north to the Hindu Kush range.<sup>28</sup> Thus the Abdālīs occupied the southeastern portion of Khurāsān, the buffer zone between the Safavid and Mughal empires. Members of the tribe moved west into the Hilmand Valley towards the city of Herat because of pressure from another Afghan tribe, the Ghalzays.<sup>29</sup> The Abdālīs had no large cities of their own, but they predominated in the area between Qandahār and Herat. Tribesmen were primarily

pastoralists or sedentary farmers who lived in tents. There were seven sub-tribes: the 'Alīzays, Achakzays, Nūr-zays, Ishāqzays, Pūpalzays, Bārakzays, and 'Alīkūzays (Figure 2).<sup>30</sup> Unlike most Afghan tribes who spoke only Pushtu, the Abdālīs, the tribe located furthest west, were highly Persianized. Their leaders as well as many of the tribesmen spoke Persian, which made them feel intellectually and culturally distinct from the other tribes.<sup>31</sup>

#### The Mughal-Safavid Rivalry over Qandahār

Qandahār was already an important trading center dating from the destruction of the old Ghaznavid winter capital at Bust in 1150 (Figure 1).<sup>32</sup> In the fifteenth century it had been a tributary to Ḥusayn Bāyqarā's kingdom in Herat. With Bāyqarā's aid the Arghun chief Zu'al-Nūn Big captured Qandahār and made it his capital. On his death in 1507, his son assumed the throne, only to be toppled by Bābur, the future ruler of India. The Uzbek, Shaybānī Khān, briefly recaptured the city and turned it over to the son of its former Arghun ruler, but it fell to Bābur again in 1522, and remained part of his Mughal territories until 1545.<sup>33</sup> Qandahār was economically important to the Mughals, as the southern caravan route passed through the city. This route remained open all year round, and thus was an important commercial link with the traders of the Indian subcontinent.

Qandahār was first added to the Safavid Empire in early September, 1545, when the Mughal ruler Humāyūn turned it over to the Iranians as payment for help in regaining his throne in India.<sup>34</sup> The death of the commander of the Safavid army, however, gave Humāyūn another opportunity to retake the city.<sup>35</sup> But the disposition of the city remained unsettled. As a border town, Qandahār would frequently change hands between the Safavids of Iran and the Mughals of India. The city marked the farthest eastward expansion of the Safavids and the area around the city served as a buffer zone between the two rival powers.

In 1558, the Safavid Shah, Tahmasb I, besieged Qandahār, which then surrendered on order from the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Akbar was unable to oppose the Safavids since he was still in the process of consolidating his own power under the tutelage of his regent Bayram Khān.<sup>36</sup> From 1558 until 1595, the Safavids controlled Qandahār, albeit poorly. During this period the territory around Qandahār was subject to constant attack from the Uzbegs. With the death of Tahmāsb I in 1576, the Safavids, beset with serious internal disorders, were powerless to prevent the Uzbegs from ravaging the area.<sup>37</sup>

In 1595 the Safavid Governor of Qandahār, Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Mīrzā, turned Qandahār over to the Mughals in exchange for some properties and for command of an army in

India.<sup>38</sup> The Mughals considered Qandahār an important city, since it was the main transmission point for armies into India and the only area on their western border not protected by the Hīndū Kūsh. Qandahār was also the entrepot for the horses from Central Asia that were so important to the Mughal armies.<sup>39</sup> The Safavids also realized the strategic importance of the area and continued to vie for control of the province.

Two years after assuming the Safavid throne in 1587, Shāh 'Abbās the Great brought the Abdālīs into prominence. He appointed Asad Allāh, called "Sadū", head of the Abdālī tribe. He designated the rest of the Pūpalzays guardians of the road between Herat and Qandahār.<sup>40</sup> After Asad Allāh's appointment, his clan was upgraded to become the paramount clan of the Afghans. From the family of Asad Allāh developed a new and powerful branch of the Abdālīs, the Sadūzays.<sup>41</sup>

Qandahār remained in Mughal hands for twenty-seven years, while at the same time Iran was engaged in a series of protracted Turko-Iranian wars. Finally, after a decisive battle near Lake Urūmīyah (Figure 1), peace was made with the Ottomans in 1618. The Safavids regained the western limits of the Iranian highlands and the ending of the Turko-Iranian wars freed 'Abbās I to take Qandahār in the east.<sup>42</sup> The Mughal governor of Qandahār had called for aid

from the Emperor Jahāngīr, but because of dissent between the Mughal ruler and his son, the army failed to advance and the city fell to Shāh 'Abbās I.<sup>43</sup>

With the capture of Qandahār, the Afghan territory of the Abdālīs and the Ghalzays once more fell into Safavid hands. Shāh 'Abbās, pleased that the Abdālīs had supported his attack on Qandahār, bestowed on their leader Sādū the title of Mīr-i Āfāghanah and reduced the tax rate on their tribal lands.<sup>44</sup> Qandahār did not remain in Iranian hands for long, however. In 1639 the Iranian Governor, 'Alī Mardān Khān, turned the city back over to the Mughals. Disgruntled since his unsuccessful attempt to gain the Safavid throne at the death of Sām Mīrzā in 1629, 'Alī Mardān Khān had spent ten years of semi-exile in Qandahār and then decided to improve his fortune by siding with the Mughals.<sup>45</sup>

In 1648, the Safavids under 'Abbās II retook Qandahār. This time the new Mughal Emperor, Shāh Jahān, sent his son, Awrangzīb, to recapture the city, but the attempt failed. Once again in 1653, the Mughal army under Dārā Shukūh tried to take the city without success. The Ghalzays supported the Safavids and harassed the Mughal army continuously as they withdrew under Safavid pressure.<sup>46</sup>

After 1649, the Safavids occupied all Abdālī and

Ghalzay tribal lands from the city of Herat in the northwest to the area around Qandahār in the southeast. But the Safavid occupation of the market centers and garrison towns of the eastern highlands did not effectively bring this area into the Safavid Empire. Rivalry with the Mughals kept the area in a constant state of unrest and prevented it from being integrated into the Safavid state.

The question of why the Ghalzay and Abdālī Afghans sided with the Safavids against the Mughals has troubled historians. Both of these tribes were Sunnī Muslims who followed the Hanafī school of theology, like the Mughals. The Shī'ah Safavids, on the other hand, looked on the Afghans as heretics. The Afghans based their preference for Safavids over Mughals on a number of sound reasons. The Safavids, beginning in the reign of Shāh 'Abbās I, were tolerant towards the Afghans' religious and cultural differences. The Mughals, until the time of Awrangzīb, had appointed Hindu generals over Muslim sections of their army. This rankled the Afghans, who preferred Shī'ah control to Hindu.<sup>47</sup> Probably the most compelling reason for Afghan preference for Safavid rule was that the Safavids were more successful militarily than the Mughals. The Safavids also relegated tribal affairs to the Afghans, appointing officials as governors in cities, but leaving the countryside in the control of the tribesmen. The

Abdālīs and Ghalzays thus sided with the strongest military power which interfered least in their tribal affairs.

### The Ghalzay Rebellion

On August 6, 1694, Sultān Ḥusayn Mīrzā became the new Safavid Shah. He had been raised in the harem under the influence of the Shī'ah theologian Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī. When Shāh Sultān Ḥusayn took power in Iran, the empire was at peace; there was little indication of the coming collapse. But soon he was faced with uprisings in different sections of the empire, including Iṣfahān and Kirmān.<sup>48</sup>

In 1703, Balūchīs under the leadership of Mīr Samandar attacked Qandahār. The Safavid governor sent troops, but the Balūchīs defeated them. Shāh Sultān Ḥusayn then decided to send a force under the Georgian convert, Georgi XI, who earlier had put down an uprising in Kirmān. Georgi, renamed Gurgīn Khān, was known for using harsh methods, and the Safavids felt that he would soon end the revolt in Qandahār against the crown.<sup>49</sup> Shāh Sultān Ḥusayn appointed him the new governor of Qandahār. Gurgīn Khān soon quieted the Balūchīs, but made the mistake of also deciding to subdue the Ghalzays in Qandahār. To do this, Gurgīn Khān thought he could humiliate the kalāntar (mayor) of Qandahār, Mīr Vays, head of the Hūtakay clan of Ghalzay Afghans, and the richest man in Qandahār, by for-

cing him to give him his daughter in marriage.<sup>50</sup>

When Gurgīn Khān first came to Qandahār, Mīr Vays had collected taxes for the Safavids and led expeditions against the rebelling Hazārahs.<sup>51</sup> Gurgīn Khān's demand for a marriage alliance, plus the fact that the Georgian had treated the Ghalzay townspeople with contempt, reportedly caused Mīr Vays to conspire against the governor. For his own protection, Gurgīn Khān sent Mīr Vays under guard to Iṣfahān.<sup>52</sup> There, Mīr Vays not only convinced the Shah to free him, but also obtained his permission for a pilgrimage to Mecca. In the holy city, unknown to the Safavids, he obtained a fatwa from the leading Sunnī 'ulamā stating it was in accordance with Islamic law for the Sunnī Ghalzays to rise up against the heretical Shī'ah Safavids. Mīr Vays returned to Iṣfahān in 1708 and was soon back in Qandahār. Because he felt that the Safavid dynasty was decadent and militarily weak, he organized an uprising against the Safavids, and had Gurgīn Khān murdered.<sup>53</sup>

The Ghalzays took over Qandahār in open defiance of the court at Iṣfahān. The Safavids had made a fatal mistake by sending Gurgīn Khān to Qandahār. They did not recognize that their hegemony over the city and Province of Qandahār depended on the maintenance of good relations with the Ghalzays. The Ghalzays tolerated the Safavids for three reasons: one, the Safavids had been stronger mili-



tarily than the Ghalzays; two, the Ghalzays feared Mughal rule; and three, in the past, the Safavids had not interfered in Ghalzay tribal affairs. By deviating from this practice of non-interference, and by becoming militarily inferior to the Ghalzays, the Safavids invited rebellion.

The Ghalzays enlisted the aid of other tribes to support their activities against Safavid rule. When the Shah sent an army to put down Mīr Vays' rebellion under the command of Khusraw Khān, the Governor of Georgia and nephew of Gurgīn Khān, Khusraw too suffered defeat; the Afghans annihilated his army of over 25,000 and killed him. The Afghans also defeated a second Safavid army. As a result, the Province of Qandahār became independent for the first time since the establishment of the Safavid state.<sup>54</sup> Mīr Vays died in 1715, but the Ghalzays retained their independence. The leadership of the tribe eventually passed to Mīr Vays' eldest son, Mahmūd, who was just as adamant as his father in his desire for independence from the Safavid state.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Abdālī Uprising

During the first six years of the Ghalzay revolt against Iran, the Abdālīs around Herat aided the Safavids against the tribe which had driven them out of Qandahār earlier. By this time, the Abdālīs were the larger of the two tribes, with approximately 60,000 families.<sup>56</sup> The

Sadūzays still ruled the Abdālīs, under Asad Allāh's grandson 'Abd Allāh Khān. The Safavids recognized 'Abd Allah Khān's supremacy. But in 1717, when 'Abbās Qulī Khān, the Safavid Governor of Herat, learned of a supposed conspiracy led by 'Abd Allāh Khān and his son Asad Allāh, he imprisoned them. When a revolt at the governor's Qizilbash garrison disrupted his forces, the Abdālīs rose in revolt and defeated his forces outside the city. The Safavids sent yet another general, but the Abdālīs defeated him too.<sup>58</sup> Apparently, Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn underestimated the threat the Abdālīs posed to his rule in Herat Province, as he waited three years before sending a large army against them. By then, the Abdālīs were able to sustain their independence.

Rivalry for control of the eastern highlands between the Abdālīs and Ghalzays ensued. In 1720, the Abdālīs attempted to take Qandahār. When the two armies met in battle at a small town between Herat and Girishk, called Dilārām (Figure 1), the Ghalzays under Maḥmūd defeated the Abdālīs and decapitated their leader's son.<sup>59</sup> Asad Allāh, the chief of the Abdālīs, was despondent over his loss. Various factions among the Abdālīs quarreled over who should replace their incapacitated chief, and political chaos resulted. Consequently, the Ghalzays were enabled to raid into Safavid territory, as the political

force which formerly barred their way past Herat was now impotent.

### The Ghalzay Invasion of the Western Highlands

The Ghalzays' intrusion into the western Iranian highlands started as a series of raids. In 1720, the Ghalzays captured Narmshīr and took the city of Kirmān. The Safavids sent 9,000 troops to stop the Ghalzays at Kirmān, but the latter had already returned to Qandahār to quell an uprising there. Thus the Safavids fortified and manned Kirmān with troops to prevent another Ghalzay raid.

In 1722, the Ghalzays under Maḥmūd made a second raid into western Iran. Maḥmūd was unable to capture Kirmān and Yazd, but decided to march all the way to Isfahān. About twelve miles from the city, on the Plain of Gulnābād, Maḥmūd and his motley army of Afghans defeated a far larger Safavid force.<sup>61</sup> Besieging Isfahān, the Afghans eventually captured the city after great loss of life.<sup>62</sup> The Ghalzays went on to capture most of the western highlands, including Qum, Qazvin, and Kāshān.

The Ghalzays were good soldiers, but they could not govern effectively because of their disunity, their lack of experience in managing an empire, and because they were Sunnīs, trying to dominate a population that was overwhelmingly Shī'ah. As Iranian opposition grew, the Ghalzays also had to face external opposition from the Ottomans and

the Russians, who were both attempting to acquire parts of the Safavid state.

Internal opposition from the Iranians eventually ended Afghan rule. Qazvin was the first city to rebel, in 1723. The Afghans reoccupied the city, but during the next five years the Ghalzays struggled to hold on to western Iran, changing leaders several times.<sup>63</sup> Before the Ghalzay capture of Iṣfahān, Shāh Sulṭān Ḥuṣayn had made his third son, Ṭahmāsb, heir apparent, and sent him out of the city to save the western highlands from the Ghalzays. Ṭahmāsb had no means to carry out his mission, being heir apparent for his compliance rather than competence. Other influential men in Iran came to Ṭahmāsb's aid when it helped their own cause. Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān Qājār was such a man.

A chief of the 'Ishqabāshī branch of the Turkish Qājār tribe, and the ruler of the Province of Astar'ābād (Figure 1), Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān Qājār earlier had revolted against Ṭahmāsb and defeated him in battle.<sup>64</sup> But later, Ṭahmāsb, with military assistance from the Turkmen tribes northeast of Astar'ābād, convinced Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān to come to terms and join forces. The two men agreed to march against Malik Maḥmūd Sīstānī, the Governor of the Province of Sīstān, who had rebelled when the Ghalzays took Iṣfahān. With the aid of the Turkmen Nādir Qulī Afshār, the future

Nādir Shāh, they confronted the rebellious governor. While the campaign was indecisive, Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān saw that Nādir Qulī would eventually overpower Ṭahmāsb, and decided to switch allegiance and join Malik Maḥmūd Sīstānī in his rebellion. Nādir Qulī found out about Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān's plans and informed Ṭahmāsb.<sup>65</sup> The Safavids threw Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān in jail and later had him executed. And Nādir Qulī became Ṭahmāsb's most important supporter.

#### Nādir Shāh's Efforts to Unify the Eastern Highlands

After the death of Asad Allāh Khān in 1720, Muḥammad Zamān Khān, his murderer, gained control of the Abdālīs for a short period. Muḥammad Khān 'Alīkūzay deposed him and led the Abdālīs against Mashhad in an attempt to enlarge their territory. They besieged the city for several months, but were unable to take it. As a result, the Abdālīs toppled Muḥammad Khān and made Zu'al-Faqār, the eldest son of Muḥammad Zamān Khān, their ruler. For two years Zu'al-Faqār remained the undisputed head of the Abdālīs, but in 1725, another son of Asad Allāh Khān challenged him, and civil war ensued. Eventually Zu'al-Faqār became Governor of Farāh, and Allāh Yār Khān Afghān, a brother of Muḥammad Khān Afghān, became Governor of Herat. The Abdālīs had to resolve their internal disputes because of an outside threat.<sup>66</sup>

Nādir Qulī had decided that he would first subdue

the Abdālīs before marching on the Ghalzay stronghold of Qandahār. On May 3, 1729, accompanied by Tahmasb Mīrzā, Nādir Qulī left Mashhad with a large army, and marched toward Herat.<sup>67</sup> The Iranian general knew that he must be cautious in his military operations against the Afghans because of their success over previous forces sent against them. At the same time that Nādir Qulī departed from Mashhad, Allāh Yār Khān marched northwest from Herat to meet him. Several minor skirmishes took place between the two armies, but the turning point came when Nādir Qulī defeated the Afghans at Rabāt-i Parīyān, a small village near Herat (Figure 1). The Abdālīs retreated, leaving hundreds dead on the battlefield. After several more months of fighting, the Afghans and Iranians reached a truce, which they broke as soon as Nādir Qulī left. Later the Afghans offered to ally themselves with Tahmāsb Mīrzā and Nādir Qulī to fight their common enemies, the Ghalzays.<sup>68</sup> Tahmāsb and his vizirs opposed the alliance, but Nādir Qulī accepted.<sup>69</sup> Allāh Yār Khān retained his position as Governor of Herat, but this time the Safavid claimant Tahmāsb acknowledged his position--the first instance of Safavid recognition for an Abdālī as the legitimate governor of a province on the eastern Iranian highlands.

Now that Nādir Qulī had pacified the Abdālīs, he

concentrated on pushing the Ghalzays out of the western highlands. In November of 1729, Nādir Qulī forced the Ghalzays and their leader Ashraf to evacuate Isfahān, and he reoccupied it. At Nādir Qulī's invitation, Tahmāsb came to Isfahān to sit on the throne. Then Nādir Qulī forced the Ghalzays out of Shīrāz. Their leader Ashraf fled towards Balūchistān, where his Ghalzay rival Husayn Sultān sent a party to intercept and murder him. Hence Ashraf met his death at the hands of his own tribesmen.<sup>70</sup> Nādir Qulī returned to central Iran.

During the next year, Nādir Qulī undertook his first campaign against the Ottomans, who had occupied Safavid territory during the upheaval in Iran. But the Abdālīs forced him to turn his attention once more to the eastern highlands when they revolted once again. The Ghalzays of Qandahār, under Husayn Sultān, wanted to join with the Abdālīs to attack Mashhad. It is uncertain why the Abdālīs decided to join in the plan, but the motives of the Ghalzays seem clear. They feared Nādir Qulī's power, and hoped to distract him from taking Qandahār Province by causing trouble in Herat Province.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile in Herat, Allāh Yār Khān wanted to maintain the alliance with Nādir Qulī, but the other Abdālīs forced him to relinquish his governorship and installed his old rival Zu'al-Faqār in his place.<sup>72</sup> Zu'al-Faqār and the Abdālīs then moved to attack

Mashhad, where Nādir Qulī was positioned. This time Nādir Qulī defeated them with the aid of Allāh Yār Khān, whom he then renamed Governor of Herat. The Abdālīs rose once more in revolt against Nādir Qulī, led by Allāh Yār Khān, who received support from the Ghalzays. Nādir Qulī attacked Herat, and on February 27, 1732, the first of Ramazan, he took the city.<sup>73</sup>

The Abdālīs and the Ghalzays allied on various occasions. Nādir Qulī was responsible for one such alliance with the Abdālīs. His motive may have been to build up a non-Safavid non-Shī'ah army which would be loyal to him.<sup>74</sup> However, 60,000 Abdālīs from Herat Province who would not cooperate with Nādir Qulī were exiled to areas around Mashhad, Nīshāpūr, and Dāmghan.<sup>75</sup> The Abdālīs and Ghalzays made alliances with other Afghan tribes, even with their tribal enemies, to fight outside aggressors when possible. The Abdālīs' original alliance with Nādir Qulī was one of convenience, not conviction; of strategy, not loyalty.

Nādir Qulī respected the military acumen of the Abdālīs to such an extent that he kept one thousand of them as his personal soldiers and bodyguards. After taking Herat, he returned to western Iran with his Abdālī warriors to oppose the Ottomans, who were making inroads on his western borders. At a battle on the Tigris River near



Kirkuk, the Abdālī contingent rescued him after his own troops deserted. Abdālī bravery has been credited with causing Nādir Qulī's promise to let them return to the eastern highlands and to give them possession of Qandahār, which was still in Ghalzay hands.<sup>76</sup> The Abdālīs, by siding with Nādir Qulī against the Ghalzays, increased the strength of their own tribe. And the final alliance between Nādir Qulī and the Abdālīs grew into a force capable of taking Qandahār.

In February of 1736, before returning to the east and becoming king, Nādir Qulī declared: "The Sunnī faith must be adopted in place of the Shī'ah, whose obnoxious and heretical practices must cease."<sup>77</sup> He apparently wanted to call the new school the Ja'farī sect, after the sixth Imam, and make Shi'ism the fifth accepted school of majority Islam. Nādir Qulī blamed the adoption of the Shī'ah faith by Shāh Ismā'il for the continual bloodshed between Iran and the non-Shī'ah Turks, Tartars, and Indians. Nādir Qulī's reasons appear blatantly political. He hoped his declaration might help bring about a temporary peace with the Ottomans. But more importantly, he sought to unite the peoples of the eastern Iranian highlands, who were overwhelmingly Sunnī, with those of the west, under an accepted school of majority Islam. The Afghan tribes in the south, and other groups north of the Hīndū Kūsh were

also Sunnī. By expounding Sunnism, he finally broke with the Safavid dynasty, whose presence still overshadowed his rule.

Two weeks later Nādir Shāh had himself crowned King. He was the most powerful military leader of the Iranians and had overcome his major opponents. After he became Shah, his first goal was to reconquer Qandahār, which had been his aim since 1729, when he first attacked Herat. His proclamation of a new state religion, on the eve of his Qandahār campaign, parallels the revolt of Mīr Vays, which was given impetus by the fatva claiming legitimacy for a revolt against the Safavids. Nādir Shāh probably thought his campaign would be more acceptable if he no longer represented the old Safavid religion.

The Qandahār campaign was not an easy operation. Since Maḥmūd Ghalzay's invasion of the western highlands in 1720, Qandahār had been ruled by Ḥusayn Sultān independently of Safavid interference. The province had prospered under his rule. Now it prepared to defend itself against the new invader. After a yearlong siege, the city fell. The Abdālīs not only received possession of the town, but also the tribal lands of the Hutākay Ghalzays.<sup>78</sup> Nādir Shāh allowed the Abdālīs whom he had earlier exiled from Herat Province to return, and sent the Ghalzays into exile in their place. He appointed Abdālīs to all the governor-

ships of the towns in the two provinces. 'Abd al-Ghanī Khān became Governor of Qandahār Province, and Abdālī leaders governed Girishk, Bust, and Zamīndavar (Figure 1).<sup>79</sup> The areas of Herat, Farāh, Dilārām, and Qandahār were all controlled by Abdālīs. Nādir Shāh, without knowing it, was setting up the administrative framework for a new kingdom which would emerge upon his death. One other action later helped unify the Afghans of the eastern highlands; Nādir Shāh enrolled several thousand Ghalzays into his personal army, forcing cooperation between members of the Ghalzays and Abdālīs. This would eventually enable them to unite against western Iranian rule.<sup>80</sup>

After his capture of Qandahār Province, Nādir Shāh marched north, capturing Ghazni and later Kābul without much difficulty. This was the first unification in modern times of Kābul, Herat, and Qandahār under a single ruler.<sup>81</sup> Nādir Shāh with his large army, which included Afghans, then proceeded to invade Mughal India. But instead of unifying Iran by his actions, Nādir Shāh like Maḥmūd before him, began destroying cities, and crushing all those who opposed him. Finally, on the night of June 20, 1747, at Faṭh'ābād (Figure 1), north of Mashhad, Nādir Shāh's Iranian officers decided to kill him, after they learned that he had ordered their massacre.<sup>82</sup> Jealousy among Nādir Shāh's supporters over their leader's depend-

ence on the Sunnī Afghans was another important reason for his assassination.<sup>83</sup> The Afghan guards, Abdālīs and Ghalzays, after realizing their leader had been slain, fought their way out of the camp and fled towards Qandahār.<sup>84</sup>

#### Establishment of the Durrānī Kingdom

Even after Nādir Shāh's death, remnants of his army surrounded the Afghans on all sides. Kābul, Herat, and Qandahār were still in Iranian hands. The need for a common defense forced the Ghalzays and Abdālīs to work together. They held a jargah (meeting of the tribal chiefs) in order to organize themselves for the coming struggle against the Iranian forces remaining on the eastern highlands. Unencumbered by two hundred years of Shī'ah Safavid tradition, the Sunnī Afghans consciously decided within three weeks of Nādir Shāh's death to form their own kingdom. They held nine meetings to select a supreme chief, each tribe trying to get its own nominee named. Finally they chose twenty-five year old Ahmad Khān Sadūzay.<sup>85</sup> Ahmad Khān was an Abdālī who had served as an officer in the army of Nādir Shāh on his campaigns. He was the younger brother of Zu'al-Faqār, the former Abdālī ruler of Herat, and a direct descendant of "Sadū" (Figure 3). Ahmad Khān, who was a member of the Sadūzay clan, was able to gain the support of Hājji Jamāl Khān, chief of the

Bārakzays, the second most important sub-tribe, which assured his election. The Afghan jargah decided that Aḥmād Shāh would set up a kingdom on the eastern highlands, totally separate from Iran. To form a government, Aḥmad Shāh appointed a grand vizir, a commander-in-chief, and a minister of war. The Afghans officially crowned him King of the Abdālīs in July, 1747.<sup>86</sup>

There could no longer be two paramount clans with claims on the Afghan throne. As part of a compromise, the Bārakzay chief Ḥājjī Jamāl Khān renounced his claim in favor of Aḥmad Khān, and was recognized as the most important tribal chief, which position reportedly would pass to his heirs.<sup>87</sup> This de facto alliance between the Sadūzay clan of the Pūpalzay sub-tribe and Muḥammadzay clan of the Bārakzay sub-tribe formed the backbone of the new kingdom, and its continuation became crucial to the Afghan sultanate's existence.

After becoming King, Aḥmad Shāh changed the name of the Abdālī tribe to Dur-i Durrān, meaning "Pearl of Pearls."<sup>88</sup> Later the tribe became known simply as the Durrānīs, and the new Afghan kingdom took on the same appellation. There is evidence to suggest that the Abdālīs of the Herat region had previously been called Durrānīs.<sup>89</sup>

Aḥmad Shāh swiftly began to take over the eastern highlands, capturing Kābul and Ghaznī without much of a

struggle. He was able to work out agreements with the Safavid Qizilbash forces that were holding garrisons. In 1748 the Durrānī Shah marched on Khurāsān. After a fourteen-month siege, Herat succumbed to the force of 25,000 men and surrendered.<sup>90</sup> This ended two hundred years of predominantly Iranian influence. The city and Province of Herat were now controlled by Sunnī Afghans.

Aḥmad Shāh marched on to Mashhad, which was controlled by the nephew of Nādir Shāh, Shāhrukh. Aḥmad Shāh's army challenged the holy city, and Shāhrukh had to surrender. The Afghans and Shāhrukh eventually reached an agreement which provided the following: one, Shāhrukh would sit on the throne of an independent principality of Khurāsān; two, Shāhrukh had to acknowledge Aḥmad Shāh's suzerainty; three, Shāhrukh was to coin money and issue firmans in Aḥmad Shāh's name; and four, the Iranians had to relinquish control of the districts of Turbat-i Haydarī, Khvaf, Bākharz, and Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām (Figure 1).<sup>91</sup> The Afghans, in return, promised to protect Shāhrukh from any external threat, and from internal political intrigue.<sup>92</sup> Aḥmad Shāh thus created a buffer zone between his empire and contenders for power on the western highlands.<sup>93</sup>

During the following years, Aḥmad Shāh consolidated his control over the eastern highlands and made raids into India to expand his kingdom. In doing this, Aḥmad Shāh

created the second largest Islamic empire then in existence. He made a total of nine different raids into India, as far as the Mughal capital of Delhi. The Durrānī Empire stretched from "Central Asia to Delhi, and from Kashmīr to the Arabian Sea" (Figure 1).<sup>94</sup> Upon his death from cancer in 1773, his empire passed to his son, Tīmūr Shāh. In his lifetime he had united the four main cities of modern Afghanistan--Herat, Kābul, Ghaznī, and Qandahār--under the first Afghan kingdom in modern history.<sup>95</sup>

Though Aḥmad Shāh extended the size of the Durrānī sultanate, he was prevented by tribal custom from concentrating all power in his own hands. The Durrānīs looked on their leader as primus inter pares. Each group in the tribe voluntarily submitted to the leader, and could withdraw support at any time. The different sub-tribes were unwilling to relinquish their autonomy to Aḥmad Shāh, forcing him to rule with the guidance of a council of elders, called a jargah, made up of the chiefs of the sub-tribes. This custom split authority in the Durrānī kingdom between the ruler and the tribal chiefs and caused rivalries.<sup>96</sup> All recognized that the survival of the kingdom depended on cooperation, and under a strong leader like Aḥmad Shāh the system functioned well. Sunnī Islam reinforced the Afghan tribal system, just as it had originally strengthened the Arab tribal system under the Prophet

Muḥammad in Medina. Muḥammad supplanted the blood bond with a bond of Muslim brotherhood, by which every believer considered himself equal before Allāh. The notion of unchallenged superiority of the ruler did not exist, and this forced the ruler to depend on the will of his Muslim brothers. In addition, the Abdālīs, as Pushtuns, adhered to a tribal code of behavior known as Pukhtunvalī. This code of conduct was the paramount influence in Abdālī life, as it was for all Pushtuns. Pukhtunvalī consisted of the duties of hospitality, tribal loyalty, revenge, faithfulness to one's word to other Pushtuns, defending one's personal and family dignity, and faithfulness to one's religion. Adherence to the code determined whether one was considered a good Pushtun. This code of tribal solidarity, loyalty, and honor separated the Abdālīs from the less tribalized Iranian elite.<sup>97</sup>

In contrast to the Afghan tribal tradition, Iṣnā Asharī Shi'ism, as interpreted by the Safavid elite and as practiced in the city of Herat, held that the power of the Shahs rested on three bases: one, on the ancient Iranian concept of farr (kingly splendor); two, on the Islamic concept of the Shah being the Shadow of God on Earth, the representative of the Twelfth Imam; and three, as the religious leader of the Safavid order, in their position as Murshid-i Kāmil, or Perfect Spiritual Master.<sup>98</sup> Divine



sanction had been an attribute of the ancient Iranian kings, a form of legitimacy in the culture that predated Islam.<sup>99</sup> When the Safavid dynasty became solidly established, a rift developed between the Shī'ah 'ulamā and the state; the Shahs maintained their claim to divine guidance even though the 'ulamā rejected it. Unlike the Shī'ahs, the Sunnī Afghans gave far less recognition to the sovereign's divine right to rule. Thus it is clear that between the Iranians and Afghans and between the Harātis and the other Sunnī ethnic groups of Herat Province, there were not only religious differences, but also different political practices. Harāti Shī'ahs had much closer cultural contact with the Iranians than with the Afghans, who differed with their distinct tribal values and religious practices.

#### The Durrānī Sultanate After the Death of Aḥmad Shāh

The successor of Aḥmad Shāh, Tīmūr Shāh, was Governor of Herat at the time of Aḥmad Shāh's death, and after a brief struggle, became king (Figure 3). He was less ambitious than his father and found little pleasure in fighting. Tīmūr Shāh had more difficulty than his father in obtaining recognition of his authority and moved the capital from Qandahār to Kābul to rid himself of inter-tribal political intrigue. Just as Nādir Shāh had once relied on the Abdālīs for protection, Tīmūr Shāh made use of 12,000 non-Durrānī Iranian Qizilbash cavalymen, the

descendants of those left on the eastern highlands at Nādir Shāh's death, for part of his army. His reliance on these Shī'ah Iranians alienated his Durrānī followers.<sup>100</sup> In 1791 there was an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate him. Violating his oath to spare the conspirators, he cruelly slew them. Two years later, he died in Kābul. Some say his enemies poisoned him.<sup>101</sup> Tīmūr Shāh had numerous wives and had sired more than two dozen sons.<sup>102</sup> This caused confusion among the Durrānīs over who should succeed to the throne. Several of the sons were governors of various cities in the Durrānī kingdom. Zamān Mīrzā, the fifth son of Tīmūr Shāh was in Kābul, and at the center of power. He formed a coalition between the Sadūzays and Bārakzays, and convinced the people and other princes of Kābul to declare him king.<sup>103</sup> His brother, Humāyūn Mīrzā of Qandahār, immediately proceeded north, hoping to challenge him for the crown; but he failed. Another of Tīmūr's sons, Maḥmūd Mīrzā, controlled Herat.<sup>104</sup> The distance between the two centers of authority prohibited a campaign to contest Zamān Mīrzā's seizure of power. Therefore, in 1793 the two princes negotiated a treaty recognizing the fait accompli.<sup>105</sup>

One of the first acts of the new king was to undermine the position of Payāndah Khān Muḥammadzay, the Bārakzay chief who had led the army against Humāyūn Mīrzā.

Payāndah Khān was an important amir, but since Zamān Shāh felt Payāndah Khān represented the interest of his own tribe rather than that of the Sadūzay, he wanted him replaced.<sup>106</sup> Consequently Zamān Shāh made Ramat Allāh Khān, a member of his own clan, his grand vizir, laying the foundations for tremendous political problems in the future.<sup>107</sup> To contend with other problems, Zamān Shāh had to make excursions into the Panjāb, to check the growing power of the Sikhs. However, in the west his kingdom faced an even larger problem in the emergence of the Qājār dynasty, which was consolidating power on the western Iranian highlands.

#### Events in Iran After the Death of Nādir Shāh

Besides Shāhrukh in Mashhad, there were four other contenders for the crown of Nādir Shāh and rule of the western Iranian highlands: Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Qājār, who had gained control of Astar'ābād; Azad Khān Ghalzay, one of Nādir Shāh's governors in Azarbā'ījān; Mardān 'Alī Khān, who after seizing Isfahān had placed a Safavid puppet on the throne; and Karīm Khān Zand, a former soldier in Nādir Shāh's army. As a matter of policy the Zand leader ordered the massacre of thousands of Afghans who had stayed behind on the western highlands after the death of Nādir Shāh.<sup>108</sup> Karīm Khān Zand soon eliminated Azad Khān Ghalzay and even those Afghans who had fought for the Zands, considering

them a "fifth column" for Azad Khān or Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī.<sup>109</sup> This action pandered to the demands of Shī'ah Iranians for vengeance against their Afghan Sunnī oppressors.<sup>110</sup> In 1757, with the Afghans eliminated, the chief contenders for control of the western highlands were Muḥammad Husayn Khān Qājār and Karīm Khān Zand. Karīm Khān Zand persuaded many of the supporters of the Qājārs to join his forces, and finally defeated Muḥammad Husayn Khān. By the end of the year, Karīm Khān Zand held tenuous control over most of the western section of the old Safavid Empire, with the exception of Khurāsān.

#### Karīm Khān Zand as Deputy

Karīm Khān Zand never declared himself Shah; instead he took the title of vakīl, or deputy. He felt it was necessary to retain Ismā'īl III Safavī as monarch until 1773, though he was only a figurehead. The prestige of the Safavid dynasty survived its demise, preventing the Shī'ah Iranians from actually forming a new dynasty.<sup>111</sup> The Safavid dynasty terminated with the death of Ismā'īl III, but Karīm Khān Zand still refused to assume the title of Shah.<sup>112</sup> The Durrānīs, as Sunnī Afghans, had no such inhibitions, and as mentioned before, formed their own kingdom within weeks of Nādir Shāh's death.

In Khurāsān, Shāhrukh remained subordinate to Aḥmad Shāh, and the eastern section of the old empire, along with

the northwestern provinces of the old Mughal dynasty, were now firmly in the hands of the Durrānīs.<sup>113</sup> Thus, by 1757 the Durrānīs and the Zands had split up the old Safavid Empire into three major components: the western highlands ruled by the Shī'āh Iranian Zands; the eastern highlands controlled by the Sunnī Durrānī Afghans; and sandwiched in between them, the small buffer zone of Shāhrukh Afshār (Figure 1).<sup>114</sup>

During the last half of the eighteenth century, the Durrānīs, unlike the Zands, kept a firm grip on their section of the highlands. This was due, in large part, to twenty years of relative peace during the reign of Tīmūr Shāh.<sup>115</sup> With the creation of the Durrānī kingdom, the Afghans in the final years of the eighteenth century had developed their own nascent nationalism.

On the western highlands, after the death of Karīm Khān Zand in 1779, civil war ensued between the Qājārs and Zands, who lacked the internal cohesion of the Durrānīs in the east. By 1794 the Qājārs wrested control of the western highlands from Karīm Khān Zand's successor, to fulfill their ambition to reunify Iran.<sup>116</sup> The Qājārs had the political and military power to unify the western highlands under a single monarchy and to crush the opposition. Their leader Āghā Muḥammad Khān fully intended to extend Qājār control over all the territory previously occupied by the

Safavids. In fact, he preferred not to be crowned king until he had accomplished this task, but bowed to political forces and began a new dynasty.<sup>117</sup> Qājār tribal lands were in Khurāsān and thus its recapture was a matter of tribal as well as dynastic prestige.

The fact that the Qājārs assumed control of Iran from those who called themselves the vakīls, gave support to their claim of being the legitimate successors of the Safavids. The impact of two hundred and twenty years of Safavid rule in Iran, the conversion of the majority of the populace from Sunnism to a nationalist brand of twelver Shi'ism, and the respect the Safavid Shahs had as Murshid-i Kāmil, made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Shī'ah Iranians to separate themselves precipitously from the Safavid dynasty. The interval between the loss of Safavid control and the consolidation of Qājār power over Shī'ah Iran allowed the Sunnī Afghans enough time to create their own separate dynastic identity. This, combined with the already existing religious, linguistic, cultural, and recent political differences, created a formidable barrier which had not existed for the Safavids. The task before the Qājārs was enormous.

The intent of the Qājār dynasty from its inception was to reconquer the eastern highlands. The Durrānīs believed these same areas were Afghan by tradition and

annexation. The claims of the two sides overlapped in the eastern sector of the old Safavid Empire. The immediate goals sought by the Qājārs, the Provinces of Qandahār and Herat, had been integrated into the Durrānī kingdom for nearly half a century. No matter what historical claims the Qājārs had to the area, the Afghans were not willing to give it up.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Hasan K. Kakar, Afghanistan: Study in Internal Political Developments (Kabul: Punjab Educational Press, 1971), p. 1 (hereafter cited as Kakar, Afghanistan). Khurāsān was considered those areas northwest and south-east of the Hīndū Kūsh.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel G. B. Malleson, Herat: The Granary and Garden of Central Asia (London: W. H. Allen, 1880), p. 35 (hereafter cited as Malleson, Herat).

<sup>3</sup>Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1940), I:199 (hereafter cited as Sykes, Afghanistan).

<sup>4</sup>Kakar, Afghanistan, p. 1. Kābulistān was considered those areas northeast and east of the Hīndū Kūsh to the Indus River. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Iranians referred to the area as Afghanistan as the Mughals had previously. The Europeans later adopted the name used by the Qājārs and Mughals.

<sup>5</sup>Shannon Caroline Stack, "Herat: A Political and Social Study," Ph.D. dissertation (The University of California at Los Angeles, 1975), p. 331 (hereafter cited as Stack, "Herat").

<sup>6</sup>Ibn Battuta, The Travels of Ibn Battuta, trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1929), p. 175 (hereafter cited as Ibn Battuta, Travels).

<sup>7</sup>Malleson, Herat, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, I:249; and Ibn Battuta, Travels, p. 175.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Afghanistan, I:268.

<sup>10</sup>Stack, "Herat," pp. 297-321.

<sup>11</sup>Yahya Khan, Tadhkirat al-Muluk (A Manual of Safavid Administration), trans. and explained by V. Minorsky (London: Luzac and Co., 1943), p. 170.



<sup>12</sup>H. F. Schurmann, The Mongols of Afghanistan (The Hague: Mouton and Co., Publishers, 1962), pp. 38-105 (hereafter cited as Schurmann, Mongols).

<sup>13</sup>Capt. Christie, "Abstract of Captain Christie's Journal," Appendix to Lt. Henry Pottinger, Travels in Beloochistan and Sind (London: Longmans, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), p. 415.

<sup>14</sup>Mountstuart Elphinstone, An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, 3rd ed., rev. 2, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1839, reprinted ed. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1972), II:203 (hereafter cited as Elphinstone, Caubul); and Schurmann, Mongols, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup>Stack, "Herat," pp. 77-83; and Elphinstone, Caubul, II:203; and Schurmann, Mongols, pp. 49-73.

<sup>16</sup>Yahya, Tadkirat al-Muluk, p. 170.

<sup>17</sup>Comment on dominance in area and differing opinions on origins, Schurmann, Mongols, pp. 42-44.

<sup>18</sup>Olaf Caroe, The Pathans 550 B.C.-A.D. 1947 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1965), pp. 24, 89-90 (hereafter cited as Caroe, Pathans).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-90 and 249.

<sup>20</sup>Laurence Lockhart, The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty (Cambridge: The University Press, 1958), p. 11 (hereafter cited as Lockhart, Safavi); and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Tabataba'i, Shi'ite Islam, trans. and ed. by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), p. 66.

<sup>21</sup>Richard N. Frye, "Harat," Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition (Leyden/London, 1962), III:177.

<sup>22</sup>Roger Savory, Iran Under the Safavids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 36 (hereafter cited as Savory, Iran).

<sup>23</sup>Stack, "Herat," pp. 324-325.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>26</sup>Caroe, Pathans, pp. 221-223.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Elphinstone, Caubul, II:84-111.

<sup>29</sup>Lockhart, Safavi, p. 95. M. Longworth Dames states that Shāh 'Abbās I removed the Abdalis from Qandahār because of their "misconduct". See M. Longworth Dames, "Kandahar," Encyclopedia of Islam: New Edition (Leyden/London, 1962), I:228. Sultān Mahmūd Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sultānī (Bombay: privately printed, 1880), pp. 59-60, mentions that the constant warfare between the Ghalzay and Abdālīs led to a division of the land.

<sup>30</sup>Vartan Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan (Stanford: University Press, 1969), p. 30 (hereafter cited as Gregorian, Emergence).

<sup>31</sup>Stack, "Herat," p. 331.

<sup>32</sup>Caroe, Pathans, pp. 168-170.

<sup>33</sup>Jouher, Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun, trans. by Major Charles Stewart (Santiago de Compostela, Spain: Sujat Gupta Publishers, n.d.), p. 78.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>36</sup>Vincent A. Smith, Akbar The Great Mogul 1542-1605, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1966), pp. 25-35 (hereafter cited as Smith, Akbar).

<sup>37</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, I:306.

<sup>38</sup>Smith, Akbar, p. 186.

<sup>39</sup>W. K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, 3rd ed., rev. by M. C. Gillett (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 38-39.

<sup>40</sup>Caroe, Pathans, p. 223; and Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sulṭānī, p. 84.

<sup>41</sup>Said Qasīm Rishtiya, Afghānistān dar Qarn-i Nūzdah (Kabul: Matba'ah-i 'Umūmī, 1958), p. 9 (hereafter cited as Rishtiya, Afghanistan).

<sup>42</sup>Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), II:178 (hereafter cited as Sykes, Persia).

<sup>43</sup>George Malletson, History of Afghanistan (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1878), pp. 200-201 (hereafter cited as Malletson, Afghanistan).

<sup>44</sup>Lockhart, Safavi, p. 96.

<sup>45</sup>Malletson, Afghanistan, p. 205.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>47</sup>Caroe, Pathans, pp. 40 and 224.

<sup>48</sup>Lockhart, Safavi, pp. 44-50.

<sup>49</sup>Ganda Singh, Ahmad Shah Durrani (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1959), p. 4 (hereafter cited as Singh, Ahmad Shah).

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Malletson, Afghanistan, p. 214; and Lockhart, Safavi, p. 85; and Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sulṭānī, p. 71.

<sup>52</sup>Malletson, Afghanistan, p. 214.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 215-234.

<sup>54</sup>Caroe, Pathans, p. 253.

<sup>55</sup>Malleson, Afghanistan, p. 240; and Lockhart, Safavi, p. 93.

<sup>56</sup>Mīrzā Muḥammad Mahdi, Tārīkh-i Nādirī, p. 4, cited in Lockhart, Safavi, p. 96. Also see 'Abd al-Karīm 'Alavī, Tārīkh-i Aḥmad (Lucknow, 1850), p. 4.

<sup>57</sup>Lockhart, Safavi, p. 96.

<sup>58</sup>Mahdi, Tārīkh-i Nādirī, p. 5, cited in Lockhart, Safavi, p. 96.

<sup>59</sup>Singh, Aḥmad Shah, p. 9.

<sup>60</sup>Lockhart, Safavi, p. 112.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 130-143.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*; and Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sulṭānī, pp. 84-85.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>65</sup>Muhammad Muhsin, Zubdat al-Tawarikh, Fols. 212b and 223b, cited in Lockhart, Safavi, pp. 309-310. The same impression is given in Sir Harford Jones Brydges' translation of The Dynasty of the Kajars, (London: James Bohn, 1834), p. 5.

<sup>66</sup>Singh, Aḥmad Shah, p. 28; and Durrani, Tārīkh-i Sulṭani, pp. 101-102.

<sup>67</sup>Laurence Lockhart, Nadir Shah (London: Luzac and Co., 1938), p. 32.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*; and Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sulṭānī, pp. 103-105.

<sup>69</sup>Mahdi, Tārīkh-i Nādirī, p. 60, cited in Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 33.

<sup>70</sup>Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 45; and Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sulṭānī, p. 86.

<sup>71</sup>Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 51; and Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sulṭānī, p. 107.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 54.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Muhsin, Zubdat al-Tawarikh, Fol. 215b, cited in Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 54.

<sup>76</sup>Mīr 'Abd al-Karīm Boukhary, Histoire de l'Asie Centrale (Persian copy included). (Paris: Lenoux, 1876), p. 14 (hereafter cited as Boukhary, Histoire).

<sup>77</sup>Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 99; and James Fraser, The History of Nadir Shah, 2nd ed. (London: privately printed, 1742; reprint Delhi: Mohan Publications, 1973), pp. 123-127.

<sup>78</sup>Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 120.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Gregorian, Emergence, p. 46.

<sup>82</sup>Lockhart, Nadir Shah, p. 261.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., pp. 260-263.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 262-263.

<sup>85</sup>Singh, Ahmad Shah, p. 25.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

- <sup>87</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, I:353.
- <sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 352.
- <sup>89</sup>Gregorian, Emergence, p. 30.
- <sup>90</sup>Boukhary, Histoire, p. 10.
- <sup>91</sup>Singh, Ahmad Shah, p. 97.
- <sup>92</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>93</sup>Sykes, Persia, II:70.
- <sup>94</sup>Louis Dupree, Afghanistan (Princeton: University Press, 1973), p. 334.
- <sup>95</sup>Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, pp. 64-65.
- <sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 65; and Elphinstone, Caubul, I:210-235.
- <sup>97</sup>Hasan Kawun Kakar, Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), pp. 59, 65, 166; and Elphinstone, Caubul, pp. 388-420.
- <sup>98</sup>Savory, Iran, pp. 2-3.
- <sup>99</sup>A. T. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1898), p. 241.
- <sup>100</sup>Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, p. 370.
- <sup>101</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, I:370.
- <sup>102</sup>Gregorian, Emergence, p. 50.
- <sup>103</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, I:371.

<sup>104</sup> Lt. Arthur Conolly, Journey to the North of India Overland from England Through Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), II:262.

<sup>105</sup> Sykes, Afghanistan, I:371.

<sup>106</sup> Rishtiya, Afghanistan, pp. 5-7.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> John R. Perry, Karim Khan Zand: A History of Iran 1747-1779 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 79-80 (hereafter cited as Perry, Karim Khan Zand).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>113</sup> Singh, Ahmad Shah, p. 98.

<sup>114</sup> Perry, Karim Khan Zand, p. 206 states: "It seems fair to assume that these two powerful contemporaries, having divided Nader's Empire so neatly between them, simply agreed tacitly to keep Khurasan as a buffer zone between their separate interest and hostile peoples."

<sup>115</sup> Arnold Fletcher, Afghanistan Highway of Conquest (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 60.

<sup>116</sup> Karīm Khān Zand was succeeded by Luft 'Alī Khān Zand.

<sup>117</sup> Boukhary, Histoire, p. 30; and Rishtiya, Afghanistan, p. 5.

## CHAPTER II

### REGIONAL CONFLICT AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION

#### IN HERAT PROVINCE 1796 - 1818

From the time of the Safavids a series of conflicts continued over regional claims on the Iranian highlands. The Durrānīs, under Aḥmad Shāh, had taken the cities of Herat and Qandahār from the Iranians, and kept them as integral parts of their Afghan sultanate on the eastern highlands. The Zands, who assumed control of the core of the old Safavid Empire and maintained effective control in the western highlands, did not make incursions into the east. But when the Qājārs came to power in the west, the question of which dynasty, Shī'ah Qājār Iranian or Sunnī Durrānī Afghan, would dominate the eastern Iranian highlands became a major question. In addition, a new element, foreign intervention, from three European powers--Britain, France, and Russia--came into play. Iranians and Afghans alike would be affected by this new development, but the conflict over control of the eastern highlands remained basically a regional battle.

In 1796 the new Shah of Iran, Āghā Muḥammad Khān, marched on Mashhad while Zamān Shāh, the Durrānī ruler, was



away in the Panjāb. He captured Mashhad from Nādir Mīrzā, grandson of the deceased Nādir Shāh and a vassal of the Afghan Durrānīs. The victorious Āghā Muḥammad Khān dug up the remains of Nādir Shāh and desecrated his tomb, because Nādir Shāh had been responsible for the death of his grandfather, Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān.<sup>1</sup> He sent the bones to Tehran. The tomb of Nādir Shāh was a Sunnī shrine, and these base acts were an insult not only to Nādir Shāh's descendants, but to the Afghans who had been his soldiers, as well. Nādir Mīrzā eluded capture and was able to flee to Afghan territory.

After capturing Mashhad, Āghā Muḥammad Shāh sent a letter informing Zamān Shāh of his victory, demanding his congratulations, and insisting the land between Mashhad and Balkh be returned to him. He claimed that since this land had been a part of Iran in the past, it now devolved to his dynasty.<sup>2</sup> The Durrānī ruler regarded Mashhad as an Afghan tributary, and on hearing of the Qājār's move, hastened from his base in Lahore to Pishāvar, the Afghan winter capital.

On January 3, 1797, Zamān Shāh marched to Kābul to prepare for war. But his ardor for conflict subsided when Āghā Muḥammad Shāh withdrew from Mashhad.<sup>3</sup> Zamān Shāh did send a congratulatory letter to the Qājār Shāh, but did not respond in a positive manner to his demands for Balkh.<sup>4</sup>

The preoccupation of Zamān Shāh with conquests in India made it possible for the Qājārs to expand at Afghan expense in Khurāsān. The Durrānīs did not have the military strength both to expand in the east and protect their western borders from the Qājārs. The attack by Āghā Muḥammad Khān was the first attempt by Iranians to retake Khurāsān since the death of Nādir Shāh forty-nine years earlier.<sup>5</sup> When Āghā Muḥammad Shāh left Mashhad, Nādir Mīrzā crossed from Durrānī territory and took up rule again. From the time of the Qājār attack on Mashhad, however, the city and province slowly slipped out of Durrānī control to become part of the Qājār kingdom. The actions of the Shah of Iran indicate it was Qājār policy eventually to reincorporate all of Khurāsān into Iran.

The following year two condemned servants assassinated Āghā Muḥammad Shāh, and his nephew Faṭḥ 'Alī Khān ascended the Qājār throne. Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh increased his military strength and looked towards the eastern highlands for future conquest. Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh and his court officials scorned their Sunnī Durrānī neighbors and condemned their connection with the descendants of Nādir Shāh, who continually tried to usurp parts of the old Safavid Empire.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile in Herat, Maḥmūd Mīrzā, Zamān Shāh's stepbrother, was planning an attack to take the Durrānī

throne from Zamān Shāh. He had only reluctantly agreed to acknowledge Zamān Shāh's authority, because the time was not right for him to advance his own ambitions.<sup>7</sup> He could not move because he feared his brother Fīrūz al-Dīn might take advantage of his absence and assume power himself. He got his chance, however, when Fīrūz al-Dīn went off on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and then into exile at the court of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh.<sup>8</sup> With Fīrūz al-Dīn out of the way, Maḥmūd Mīrzā moved toward Qandahār, where he was defeated by Zamān Shāh. Maḥmūd Mīrzā had to flee to Farāh, and exile. Zamān Shāh proceeded to Herat and took the city.

Zamān Shāh stayed in Herat for only a few months before proceeding again to India, hoping to duplicate the actions of his grandfather, Aḥmad Shāh. He left his son Qaysar Mīrzā as governor in Herat, but his lack of interest in maintaining direct control tempted Maḥmūd Mīrzā to retake the city. Reports of Maḥmūd Mīrzā's attempt to regain Herat forced Zamān Shāh to turn back. Reportedly the vizir of Qaysar Mīrzā in Herat sent a threatening letter to Maḥmūd Mīrzā which so upset the dispossessed ruler that he fled to Bukhārā. Fearing for his life there, he went on to Tehran, where the Qājār ruler Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh was sheltering his brother, Fīrūz al-Dīn.

Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh's court thus became a refuge for Afghan princes and dissidents who opposed the Durrānī

Shahs. It was to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh's advantage to help those in exile for two main reasons: one, by protecting those Afghans out of favor with the Durrānī leadership, he could later send them back to stir up inter-tribal rivalries in the Durrānī kingdom; and two, Afghans at the court lent visible support to his claim of suzerainty over the inhabitants on the eastern highlands.

In 1798, fearing Mashhad and Herat might fall to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh, Zamān Shāh, in correspondence between the two courts, pressed the Qājārs to turn over all of Khurāsān to Afghan control.<sup>9</sup> The insulted Qājār Shah replied that Iran meant to extend her borders to the frontiers of the Safavid kingdom. Concurrently, the British East India Company, wary of Durrānī expansion to the southeast, had their Iranian commercial representative at Bū'shahr, Maḥdī 'Alī Khān, contact Tehran to persuade the Shah to attack the Afghan kingdom. Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh needed no persuasion; he was already planning an attack. Nonetheless, the East India Company had authorized their envoy to offer the Shah a subsidy for his efforts. The Qājārs hoped to prevent the Afghans from maintaining an independent state on the eastern highlands.<sup>10</sup> As a result of the Afghan demands, not those of the British, Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh had already sent troops under Fīrūz al-Dīn and Maḥmūd Mīrzā back to Khurāsān to create difficulties for the Durrānīs. Maḥdī 'Alī Khān's

correspondence from Bū'shahr arrived apparently after the plan was already in effect.<sup>11</sup> The Afghans in power defeated the Iranian forces, however, and they had to return to Tehran. Zamān Shāh consequently felt the situation was stable, and once again started off to renew his conquests in the Panjāb.

Frequent inter-tribal disputes among the Afghans led them to accept non-Durrānī aid. Maḥmūd Mīrzā hoped that his protector Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh would help him gain back Herat from his stepbrother. At the same time, Zamān Shāh unwisely sought British support for his expedition to the Panjāb.<sup>12</sup> The British would not cooperate because they feared a Muslim uprising in India. Instead, they sent an envoy to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh in Tehran, imploring him to foment political unrest in the east to keep Zamān Shāh in check.<sup>13</sup> Zamān Shāh thereupon demanded that Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh remove his troops from Khurāsān.<sup>14</sup> Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh agreed to withdraw his army on condition that Zamān Shāh allow Fīrūz al-Dīn and Maḥmūd Mīrzā to return to Afghanistan unmolested. Zamān Shāh acquiesced, but rushed back to Kābul just in case the Iranians were plotting with Maḥmūd Mīrzā to retake Herat.

During Zamān Shāh's absence, the alliance between the Sadūzays and Muḥammadzays broke down. Upon his return, Payāndah Khān Muḥammadzay, the head of the Bārakzay sub-

tribe, failed in an attempt to assassinate Zamān Shāh, who quickly had the chief of the Bārakzays and his co-conspirators executed. By executing the ex-vizir, the king alienated the whole Durrānī Bārakzay sub-tribe which Payāndah Khān had led. Thus Zamān Shāh lost the support of the people who could have kept him in power. He also created a blood feud between himself and Faṭḥ Khān, the eldest son of Payāndah Khān, a feud which eventually led to continual conflict in Herat Province and the end of Sadūzay rule in Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup> Faṭḥ Khān, determined to unseat Zamān Shāh, traveled to Iran to join forces with Maḥmūd Mīrzā, who led a small group of soldiers the Shah of Iran had given him. Together they took Qandahār. To what extent the British envoy had influenced the Shah to provide the token force is unknown. It appears to be a case of the Shah playing one Afghan off against another in order to create a diversion so he could reenter Khurāsān with his own troops.

Zamān Shāh, meanwhile, thinking his troubles were over since Payāndah Khān was dead, resumed his campaign in India. When he heard that Maḥmūd Mīrzā and Faṭḥ Khān had taken Qandahār, he started back to Kābul. Maḥmūd Mīrzā reached the capital before him and named himself ruler, in 1800. The Bārakzays captured the dispossessed king and blinded him as an act of revenge.<sup>16</sup> They also executed the king's vizir, Ramat Allāh Khān.<sup>17</sup>

The 1801 Treaty Between the Qājārs and the British

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, European intervention in affairs in Herat and Qandahār Provinces was minimal. The British envoy to the Qājār court had tried to promote rivalry in the Afghan kingdom to discourage Durrānī expansion in India. Deeper European involvement in the affairs of the area was not far off.

The British had been involved in India for many years, and with the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon in 1798, British fears of an attack on India heightened. They were intimidated by Napoleon's claim that "the Power who is master of Egypt would in the long run be master of India."<sup>18</sup> In response to the perceived threat from the French, the British began to make contacts with both Iranian and Afghan leaders, and to play a more active role in Khurāsān.

During these years the British and the French were engaged in an open diplomatic and military rivalry for influence in the Middle East and Central Asia. According to the French Foreign Minister Talleyrand, France needed to expand and colonize in order to offset the growing economic and military power of Britain. In 1798, with the consent of Napoleon, Talleyrand engineered the idea of a French attack on Egypt.<sup>19</sup> He knew that such a strike would not

only humble the British, but also show the eastern nations that England was not the only European power. He hoped that if they could forcibly intervene in British trade with India and the orient it would eventually lead to French domination of the Middle East and India. By 1800 France had taken Egypt from the Mamluks and had made raids up the Persian Gulf.<sup>20</sup>

The British tried to counter every French move. If France advanced into India overland, the route would have to be through Iran and the Durrānī kingdom. The Durrānī ruler of the eastern highlands, Zamān Shāh, had been a threat to British defenses. His continuing raids into the Panjāb kept India in a state of uneasiness. The British felt that pressure by the Qājār Shah on the Afghan's western borders would force the Afghans to abandon their attacks on the subcontinent and turn their attention to Khurāsān.<sup>21</sup> Then Britain could concentrate on the French threat.<sup>22</sup> As a result, the East India Company sent Captain John Malcolm as a representative to Tehran to approach the Qājārs on the possibility of concluding an offensive alliance against the Durrānīs.<sup>23</sup>

The British sought to encourage Iranian military pressure on the provinces of Herat and Qanadhār. There was, however, sufficient regional antagonism to guarantee continued conflict in the eastern Iranian highlands regardless



of the new British plans. Britain apparently did not realize, or would not recognize, that a regional struggle between the Durrānī and Qājār dynasties was already taking place. Nor did the British realize that they were not responsible for Iranian interests or actions in eastern Khurāsān but only added support to the Qājār's irredentist goal of reincorporating the two provinces into their kingdom. From the time of the French involvement in Egypt, the British Government believed that any Iranian involvement on the eastern Iranian highlands was motivated by European political intrigue. They disregarded the fact that Iran was not a puppet of the Russians or the French in its actions, but had its own territorial ambitions separate from European interests.

At the same time that the British planned to initiate diplomatic relations with the Qājār court, Iran was facing another problem from the north. Since the time of Peter the Great, Russia had showed an interest in territorial aggrandizement at the expense of Iran. Shāh Tahmāsb, in 1722 had requested help from the Czar against the Ghalzay Afghans who were ravaging Iran. An agreement was concluded, whereupon Russia entered the sphere of Iranian politics.<sup>24</sup> With a large army and his wife Catherine at his side, Peter the Great marched to Darband, in the then Safavid Province of Daghistān. The Russians named their

terms for lending their assistance: the Iranians would have to cede the provinces of Daghistān, Shirvān, Shakī, Bākū, Talish, Ardibil, Ghīlān, Māzāndarān, and Astar‘ābād as payment. Ismā‘īl Big, the Safavid representative to Peter agreed to these exactions. Tahmāsb, however, had no intention of handing over the territories to the Russians, and never ratified the agreement.<sup>25</sup> The agreement gave Russia a pretext for a claim not only to the Caucasus, but the whole Caspian Sea and northern Iran. Later in the century, Nādir Shāh forced the removal of the Russians from all the old Safavid provinces and for the rest of the eighteenth century, the Russians made only one major attempt to capture territory under the control of Iranian rulers. Iran received a reprieve when the Russians suspended that attempt in 1796, after the death of Catherine the Great.<sup>26</sup>

In 1800, after he had reunited and reorganized much of central Iran, Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh sought to reestablish Iranian control over the Caucasus. He asked George XII, King of Georgia, to send his son to Tehran as a token of his loyalty, and also as a guarantee of his subservience.<sup>27</sup> George XII hesitated, as most of Georgia was Christian and had no desire to submit again to Muslim rule. The Russian envoy to the Georgian court encouraged the king to refuse compliance. The Georgian ruler decided that the only way to protect Georgia from the Iranians was to abdicate his throne

in favor of the Russian czar. This was the perfect opportunity for Russia to gain control over a large section of the northeastern part of the old Safavid Empire. In the fall of 1800, Georgia became part of Russia.<sup>28</sup>

In that same year the Marquis of Wellesley, Governor-General of India, sent Captain John Malcolm to Iran to obtain a guarantee that the Qājārs would halt the Dur-rānī incursions in the Panjāb. Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh looked on Malcolm's embassy as advantageous. The Iranian court needed an ally against the Russians. Besides, Malcolm, who had come bearing lavish gifts for his hosts, favorably impressed the Qājārs. Since both powers had compatible goals, they concluded a treaty in January, 1801. The following three articles of the treaty protected British India from both the Afghans and the French:

#### Article 2

If the king of the Afghans should ever show a resolution to invade India, which is subject to the government of the monarch, the prince of high rank, the king of England, an army overthrowing mountains, furnished with all warlike stores, shall be appointed from the State of the conspicuous and exalted high and fixed in power (the king of Persia), to lay waste and desolate the Afghan dominions, and every exertion shall be employed to ruin and humble the above mentioned nation.

#### Article 3

Should it happen that the king of the Afghans ever becomes desirous of opening the gates of peace and friendship with the government of the king (of Persia), who is in rank like Solomon,

in dignity like Jumsheed, the shade of God; who has bestowed his mercy and kindness on the earth; when negotiations are opened for an amicable adjustment, it shall be stipulated in the peace concluded that the king of the Afghans, or his armies shall abandon all design of attack on the territories subject to the government of the king above mentioned, who is worth of royalty, the king of England.

#### Article 4

Should ever any king of the Afghans or any person of the French nation commence war and hostilities with the powerful of the enduring State (of the king of Persia), the rulers of the government of the king (of England), whose Court is like heaven, and who has been before mentioned shall (on such event) send as many cannon and warlike stores as possible, with necessary apparatus, attendants, and inspectors, and such supply shall be delivered over at one of the ports of Persia, whose boundaries are conspicuous to the officers<sup>29</sup> of the high in dignity, the king of Persia.

There is little doubt that Malcolm looked at the 1801 treaty, the first signed by the Qājārs with a European power, as a completely one-sided victory for Britain. The Qājārs promised to help the British against both the Afghans and the French, and did not receive much in return.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, the Shah of Iran viewed the treaty: first, as a firm pledge by Britain to come to his aid if the French attacked; second, as a first step in obtaining help against Russia; and third, as additional support for his attempts at political expansion on the eastern Iranian highlands.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, as this was the first treaty with a European power it is doubtful the Iranians understood all

the implications of its contents.

In the 1830's the British would argue, in reference to the above three articles, that the Iranians made two main concessions: one, they acknowledged the Afghans were an independent people; and two, they gave official Qājār recognition to the existence of Afghanistan as an independent country.<sup>32</sup> The Qājārs denied that the treaty had meant any such thing.<sup>33</sup> However, the use in the above articles of the terms "king of the Afghans", "Afghan dominions", and "Afghan nation", in their western context, were new concepts for the Qājārs. In later dealings with the British the Qājārs would be very careful when concluding agreements.<sup>34</sup> Malcolm, an employee of the East India Company, had not come to Iran strictly for political reasons. He also hoped to increase trade with the country. Thus, in addition to the joint defense treaty, he negotiated and signed a commercial treaty which allowed British traders to settle anywhere in Iran, and provided for their protection. The Commercial Treaty of 1801 with the British was the most liberal treaty the Qājārs would ever sign with a European country.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, with the Russians pushing down from the north, the British knocking at the door in the Persian Gulf, and the French hoping to use Iranian troops in their planned invasion of India, Iran entered a new era of

involvement with European powers. The Qājārs would have to employ all their diplomatic skills, not only to expand in the east, but to survive the pressure of the vise the Europeans were placing around them.<sup>36</sup>

### Problems in the Afghan Kingdom

Inter-tribal conflicts continued to weaken the Durrānī kingdom. Thus the threat to British interests in India diminished to such an extent that the need for an alliance between the British and the Qājārs against the Durrānī sultanate was virtually eliminated. When Maḥmūd Shāh captured the throne of Kābul, he theoretically reunited the main cities of the sultanate--Kābul, Herat, Pishāvar, and Qandahār--under one leader. This unification was short-lived. Though Maḥmūd Shāh had forced his brother Fīrūz al-Dīn into exile, after Maḥmūd Shāh captured the throne in Kābul, Fīrūz al-Dīn took advantage of the power vacuum in Herat.<sup>37</sup> Fīrūz al-Dīn then captured the city of Herat, which was in the hands of the son of Zamān Shāh, Qayṣar Mīrzā. Qayṣar Mīrzā fled to Tehran and the Qājār court of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh.<sup>38</sup> Fīrūz al-Dīn acknowledged Maḥmūd Shāh as king, but actually ran the province as if it were independent.<sup>39</sup> The distance between Herat and Kābul protected him from any immediate challenge from his brother.

In addition to the difficulties Maḥmūd Shāh faced

in Herat, he was also in trouble in Kābul. He was unable to control the expenditures of his profligate Bārakzay vizir Faṭḥ Khān. Maḥmūd Shāh's reign was dependent on harmony with the Bārakzay sub-tribe, whose loyalty was assured by giving Faṭḥ Khān a free hand.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, Maḥmūd Shāh lacked the funds for any substantial military campaign. Beset with these internal problems, Maḥmūd Shāh could scarcely plan new expeditions to India, and, in fact, was confronted with an external threat, from the Qājārs, who were renewing their campaign to conquer Khurāsān.

In 1802, while Maḥmūd Shāh clung to power in Kābul, Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh attacked Mashhad. The city was taken from Nādir Mīrzā Afshār, who in order to pay his troops had had to pillage again the tomb of the Imām Riḏā, the sainted eighth Imām of the Shī'ah world. For the repeated desecration, the Qājār Shah put to death the offender, Nādir Mīrzā, and all but one member of his family.<sup>41</sup> To avenge Nādir Mīrzā's action further, the leading Shī'ah 'ulamā of the city destroyed the tomb of Nādir Shāh.<sup>42</sup> The execution of Nādir Mīrzā and his family, the destruction of Nādir Shāh's tomb, the closing of the buffer zone between the Durrānīs and the Qājārs, and the incorporation of Mashhad into the Qājār realm were only a few of the many actions that brought to a head the animosity between the Durrānīs and the Qājārs in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Maḥmūd Shāh in Kābul was unable to respond to this challenge to his political control in Khurāsān because of his own weak position. In addition, his head vizir Faṭḥ Khān was involved in a power struggle with other Durrānī leaders. The vizir insisted on protecting the Shī'ah Qizilbash tribe in Kābul. A great many of the inhabitants of Kābul at the time were Shī'ahs, and to persecute the Qizilbash bodyguard of Maḥmūd Shāh would not only destroy Maḥmūd Shāh's most loyal fighting force, but also the loyalty of the Shī'ahs of the city.<sup>43</sup> Faṭḥ Khān's continued support of the Qizilbash, however, after violent protest by the other Sunnī Durrānīs, led to his downfall.

Shujā'al-Mulk, the brother of Zamān Shāh, hoping to take advantage of the vizir's fall from favor, declared himself king in Pishāvar, and marched on to Kābul. He easily defeated the forces sent to oppose him by Faṭḥ Khān. And Faṭḥ Khān, forced to retreat to Qandahār, arranged there for Kāmran Mīrzā, the son of Maḥmūd Shāh and his possible successor, to go to Herat and thus escape Shujā'al-Mulk's wrath. Faṭḥ Khān's trip to Qandahār did not save the situation, because Shujā'al-Mulk followed him in order to subjugate the city. Faṭḥ Khān was not above working for the new pretender, and said he would cooperate if that Sadūzay leader would return the office of chief court advisor and the other offices which had been held by his



father.<sup>44</sup> Shujā' al-Mulk refused to do this and made the same mistake as his brother Zamān Shāh--he alienated Faṭḥ Khān's clan and thus the whole Bārakzay sub-tribe. Shujā' al-Mulk appointed Qayṣar Mīrzā Governor of Qandahār and the disgruntled Faṭḥ Khān departed for Girishk (Figure 1).<sup>45</sup> When he returned to Kābul, he found Shujā' al-Mulk on the throne, and Maḥmūd Shāh in prison.

Fīrūz al-Dīn in Herat had only just begun to establish his control over that city when the revolt against his full brother Maḥmūd Shāh took place. Since Shujā' al-Mulk was in no position militarily to impose his will on Fīrūz al-Dīn, he therefore accepted Fīrūz al-Dīn's nominal recognition of his sovereignty. Herat and its leader Fīrūz al-Dīn were almost completely independent.<sup>46</sup>

With a new ruler on the throne in Kābul, Herat in de facto rebellion against Kābul, and Qājār pressure in Khurāsān, the Durrānī kingdom was seriously weakened. The new involvement in regional affairs by European powers continued, further complicating the situation.

#### French Diplomatic Endeavors

The French were still looking for ways to increase their influence in the Persian Gulf. They were aware that the British had failed to ratify the treaty made by Malcolm with the Qājārs in 1801. An overture was made in 1804 through their envoy in Syria expressing their will-

ingness to negotiate. The one condition attached to the proposal was that the Iranians would have to repudiate the treaty made with Britain. The Iranians and French both hesitated, leaving the question unresolved.

In 1802, and again in 1805, the Shah of Iran sent missions to India to solicit British aid against the Russians, who were moving ever closer to Iran. Since Russia was an ally in the war against Napoleon, the proposals of the Shah's envoys were rejected by the British. To counter the French attempt to establish an alliance and preserve any influence they had in Tehran, the British ratified Malcolm's treaty with Iran.

Fath 'Alī Shāh, understandably, had no patience with the British when they refused to help him. Instead, he welcomed an alliance with the French, which stipulated the French would aid against the Russians. In 1807 Mīrzā Muḥammad Rīzā was sent to Napoleon's winter headquarters in Poland, at Finkenstein, to begin negotiations. In the fall, Napoleon sent General Claude Gardanne to Tehran to finalize the agreement, which provided for training the Iranian army, as well as military aid against the Russians, British, and Afghans.<sup>47</sup> Both sides ratified the treaty in Tehran on December 20, 1807.

An important part of this treaty, just as the Anglo-Iranian treaty of 1801, was concerned with the east-

ern Iranian highlands. Article 10 of the treaty dealt with soliciting Afghan support for an overland invasion of India. In this article, the Shah of Iran pledged to:

...use all his influence to persuade the Afghans and other peoples of Qandahar to add their armies to his fighting England and after obtaining passage of their territory he will send an army against the English possessions in India.<sup>48</sup>

The French and the Iranians hoped to cross the eastern Iranian highlands to invade India. How the Qājārs would be able to obtain Afghan help is not clear. Shujā' al-Mulk was not interested in allowing foreign troops into Durrānī territory. This article, like Articles 2, 3, and 4 of the 1801 treaty with Britain, indirectly recognized Afghan territory as a separate political entity on the eastern Iranian highlands by pledging to seek "permission" to pass through Afghan territory and to obtain help from "their armies."<sup>49</sup>

Another important article of the treaty for the Qājārs was Article 3, which pledged French assistance in regaining the Caucasus from Russia.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately for the Qājārs, an unexpected event changed the French position on this subject. Napoleon concluded a peace treaty with the Russians at Tilsit a few weeks after the treaty of Finkenstein which made no mention of the return of Georgia to Iran. This new treaty included a joint Franco-Russian front against Great Britain.<sup>51</sup> The treaty thus precluded

acting against Russian incursions upon Iranian soil as stipulated in the treaty with Iran.

The Iranians were now in the awkward position of having no allies. They had repudiated the British in favor of the French, who had shown a willingness to protect them from Russian expansion into Iranian territory. But the French disregarded the pledges made to Iran when Napoleon and Alexander of Russia made their pact on India. The French envoy Gardanne tried to persuade the Russians to sign a treaty with the Qājārs, but was unsuccessful. The final break came when Gardanne was unable to stop General Boudovitch's attack on Eriyan in September, 1808.<sup>52</sup>

The British now had their two arch enemies in Europe teamed up against them. Within hours of the Tilsit agreement, the British Foreign Secretary and Britain made plans to regain the initiative with Iran.<sup>53</sup> Through all the political intrigue surrounding Malcolm's trip to Iran, Gardanne's journey to Tehran, and the Peace of Tilsit ran the theme of control of the Afghan kingdom, and indirectly of Herat and Qandahār. The British believed the area of Herat Province would surely be the line for their defense of India if an invasion did come. If the French or Russians were to invade India overland, the only possible route lay through the provinces of Herat and Qandahār.<sup>54</sup> The British promoted the idea that the road to India would

pass through the city of Herat.<sup>55</sup> Russia, France, and Britain knew little of Herat and Qandahār Provinces and the regional struggle for control of these areas that had gone on between Afghan and Iranian in the past. But considering these European powers knew little of the geographical and climatic difficulties of marching a modern European army over 1,200 miles of some of the driest and hottest areas on earth, the possibility of their doing so was extremely doubtful. Because of French and Russian interests in Iran, however, the British felt compelled to enter into new negotiations with the Qājārs and Afghans to neutralize any possible threat. Given the physical and logistical barriers to any such plan, it would appear that the threat to British India existed largely in the minds of the British.

#### Holy War Between Fīrūz al-Dīn in Herat and the Qājārs

While the Europeans played their never ending game of power politics, the Afghans were almost totally oblivious of European designs on their territory. In 1807, Faṭḥ Khān persuaded Fīrūz al-Dīn to try to take the throne from Shujā' al-Mulk. Fīrūz al-Dīn supplied Faṭḥ Khān with 6,000 of his best troops, under the command of his son Malik Qaṣīm. The troops proceeded towards Qandahār. The fact that Fīrūz al-Dīn himself did not go was in keeping with his cautious nature. Shāh Shujā' moved to protect

Qandahār, but did not have to fight; Fīrūz al-Dīn had recalled his troops because of an impending attack on Herat by the Qājārs. When it came to choosing between the defense and possession of Herat Province or the nebulous chance of success against the head of the Durrānī kingdom, Fīrūz al-Dīn was quick to choose Herat.<sup>56</sup> The Qājārs were moving on Herat, ostensibly because earlier Fīrūz al-Dīn had attacked the frontier post of Ghūrīyān, between Herat and Mashhad. The Iranians claimed this post, but so did the Afghans. Fīrūz al-Dīn's assault gave the Qājārs an excuse to strike against Herat.

Fīrūz al-Dīn's defense forces consisted of seven hundred Durrānīs and two thousand Iranian guards (probably Qizilbash). He also had five or six thousand armed Aimaq tribesmen.<sup>57</sup> In order to gain the offensive, Fīrūz al-Dīn declared a holy war against the Shī'ah Qājārs. With the help of Sufī Islām, a fanatical Uzbek Sunnī mullā (religious leader), and Ḥājjī Mullā Mūsa', the head of the Sunnī 'ulamā of Herat, Fīrūz al-Dīn was able to rouse the people to his support. Sufī Islām and Ḥājjī Mullā Mūsa' were in everyday life bitter enemies, but for the glory of Sunnī Islam, and a chance to defeat the mutually hated enemy, they vowed to lead the attack against the Iranians.<sup>58</sup> The two religious leaders rode off to battle at the head of their ruler's small army in a gilded howdah, atop an

elephant. The religious leaders convinced these men that it was their religious duty to destroy the Shī'ah heretics. They fervently believed being martyred would earn them a place in heaven. Before the day finished, most of them earned their place. This disastrous battle took place about twelve farsakhs (fifty miles) from Herat, at the village of Shāhdih (Figure 1).<sup>59</sup>

The Qājār army, sent by Muḥammad Valī Mīrzā Qājār, and led by Muḥammad Khān Qājār, greatly outnumbered the Afghan force. When Fīrūz al-Dīn's son did not arrive from Qandahār with the majority of the ruler's army, the Afghans had to struggle against tremendous odds. The charge, led by Sufī Islām was defeated, and Fīrūz al-Dīn barely escaped with his life. Sufī Islām and Ḥājjī Mullā Mūsa<sup>a</sup> were both killed; and the skin from the latter's head was tanned and sent to Tehran, and his body burned.<sup>60</sup> The Qājārs advanced on Herat, prepared to besiege it in order to defeat the "demonical" Afghans.<sup>61</sup>

After losing the battle against the Qājārs, Fīrūz al-Dīn retreated to Herat, where he prepared for the siege. Just as the siege was underway, Malīk Qaṣīm, son of Faṭḥ Khān, and his army approached from Qandahār, forcing the Qājārs to comprise with the Afghans. Fīrūz al-Dīn agreed to pay two years' revenue to Iran, and to send one of his sons to Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh as a hostage. This was the first

time that a Durrānī ruler of Herat had paid tribute to the Qājārs to avoid conflict. The Qājārs also demanded that the daughter of Fīrūz al-Dīn be given in marriage to Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā Qājār, the Governor of Qājār Khurāsān. The Afghans refused this demand; giving their women to non-Afghans, or giving a Sunni Durrānī to a Shī'ah Iranian Qājār, was an insufferable insult.<sup>62</sup> When Shāh Shujā' of Kābul heard about the Iranian insult, he nearly set out with an army to avenge the tattered Afghan honor. But being a better politician than religious leader, he realized that it was impossible.

The unceasing contention between Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh and Fīrūz al-Dīn intensified the religious antagonism between Sunnī and Shī'ah and fed the Shah of Iran's desire to regain Herat. Once again, the Afghans were unable to respond militarily to Qājār encroachments on Khurāsān. But other events would intervene so that reabsorption of Khurāsān by the Qājārs would have to wait for a more auspicious time.

#### Iran's Treaties with Britain and Russia of 1813 and 1814

Before the Qājārs were aware of the Peace of Tilsit, John Malcolm, who was now a brigadier general, landed at Bū'shahr on the Persian Gulf and sought permission to go to Tehran.<sup>63</sup> Since the French had already promised to help the Qājārs against the Russians, Faṭḥ 'Alī



Shah would not see the representative of the East India Company. After he learned of the Peace of Tilsit and the Russian attack on Erivan, however, the Shah hoped that some arrangement with the British could be made.

So in the fall of 1808, when Sir Harford Jones arrived in Iran with a proposed treaty promising to help Iran against the Russians, and offering to subsidize the Qājār's war effort against the Russians, Fāṭh 'Alī Shāh quickly agreed to the terms.<sup>64</sup> Article 4 of the treaty can be seen as a reflection of Qājār policy: Britain promised to help Iran "in case any European forces have invaded or shall invade the territories of his Majesty the King of Persia."<sup>65</sup> For the Qājārs, this was an improvement over the treaty of 1801, for it covered invasion by "any" European country, not just France. Unfortunately, it would take the Iranians until 1828 to realize that Britain would not support the Iranians against any European power with whom she was at peace. Nonetheless, Article 7 of the treaty gave the Iranians a free hand in Khurāsān:

In case war takes place between His Persian Majesty and the Afghans, His Majesty the King of Great Britain shall not take any part there in, unless it be at the desire of both parties, to afford his mediation for peace.<sup>66</sup>

The Qājārs remembered that Russian interference in the conflict over control of the former Safavid Province of Georgia led to its becoming part of Russia. They appar-

ently did not want the eastern highlands to become part of British India. The Iranians were unable to take advantage of this provision of the treaty, however, as they were engaged in a protracted war with the Russians.

Between 1804 and 1813, Iran and Russia were constantly at war. The treaty with England provided Iran with a certain amount of supplies and advisors.<sup>67</sup> Events in Europe intervened again to change British policy. When news reached Tehran that England made peace with the Russians in 1812, the British had to withdraw from active support of Iran's war effort. England had no intention of opposing a European military power with whom she was at peace, regardless of the consequences for Iran. In that same year, Sir Gore Ouseley became the British representative to the Qājār court. He drew up a definitive treaty, based on the earlier one concluded by Jones. The British Government amended it in London, and both sides ratified it in 1814. In all three drafts of the treaty, the British pledged to stay out of any conflict between Iran and the Afghans.<sup>68</sup>

War with Russia ended in 1813. By the end of 1812, Iran had lost so much territory to the Russians that the future seemed hopeless. The Qājārs asked Sir Gore Ouseley to act as mediator, and in the fall of 1813, Iran and Russia signed the Treaty of Gulistan, which gave to Russia the

provinces Darband, Bākū, Shirvān, Shakī, Qarabagh, a section of Talish, and all the rest of Georgia. The Iranians agreed to such losses, viewing them as only temporary.<sup>69</sup> The Treaty of Gulistan and the Anglo-Persian Definitive Treaty of 1814 mark the beginning of an important epoch in modern Iranian history. From this time on, the main desire of the Qājārs in diplomatic relations with European powers was to play one power against the other for the sake of survival and for the attainment of their ambitions.

The feared threat of an European invasion of India through Iran and the Durrānī kingdom had ended in 1814 with the defeat of the French at Waterloo. For the remainder of the first half of the nineteenth century, the competition for dominant foreign influence in Iran became a two-way struggle between Russia and Britain, while in the remainder of the Durrani kingdom, British influence predominated. Britain still feared the possibility that Russia would invade India by way of the Iranian highlands, but not enough to strengthen the Iranian army or make new agreements with the Afghans.

Economic competition between Russia and Britain continued in Iran. By the Treaty of Gulistan, the Russians gained the right to have consular agents in every major city in Iran. The English felt disadvantaged in not having this right.<sup>70</sup> By the same treaty, the Russians gained con-

trol of the Caspian Sea and the concession that Russian goods would be charged only a five per cent customs duty. Even though the Russians forced Iran to give them very competitive trading rates, the volume in Russian trade did not increase substantially, and was unimportant to the Russian economy.<sup>71</sup> The commercial advantages the Russians gained from the Treaty of Gulistan were not exploited. Iran benefited from the trade since much more was sold to the Russians than bought.<sup>72</sup>

Trade with the British was a different story. Trade between Iran and Britain rose sharply in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. Imports into Iran consisted of Indian and English cotton cloth, spices, tea, sugar, candy, coffee, woolen goods, steel, tin, lead, iron, and drugs.<sup>73</sup> Trade figures are few and unclear, but it appears that Britain competed very successfully with Russia for the Iranian market between 1813 and 1826. Over all, Iran succeeded in exporting as much as she imported. While she bought more from the British than she sold, she was able to offset this deficit by her surplus of trade with Turkey, Russia, and Central Asia.<sup>74</sup> Thus Iran was not at this time dependent upon either Russia or Britain, and relationships with these countries still were related to political considerations--especially on their support or opposition to Qājār goals of expanding in the east and

regaining territory in the west.

Five years after the first Russo-Persian War, relations between Iran and Russia had not improved. Iran had hoped for a return of some of her former territories, and in 1817 the Russian General Yermelov arrived in Tehran for discussion on this matter. At first there was hope that finally the issue would be settled. The General, though "magnificently" entertained, did not return one square inch of territory.<sup>75</sup> On his way back to Russia, Crown Prince 'Abbās Mīrzā met him in Tabrīz and treated him coldly, knowing that the Russian had no intention of returning territory along the Iranian northwestern frontier. Further complicating the situation, in 1821 the Russians succeeded in convincing 'Abbās Mīrzā to invade Turkey. The Russian agent in Tehran, Mazarovitch, who thought Russia was ready to declare war on Turkey, felt that if he could get the Iranians to attack the Ottoman Empire, it would benefit Russian policy.<sup>76</sup> Later Russia did not declare war, leaving Iran to fight alone against the Ottomans. The Treaty of Erzerum restored peace in 1823, with no territorial changes. Animosity in Iran for the Russians, who instigated the war, ran high. Preoccupied with affairs on their western borders, the Qājārs had little time to renew their expansion in the east, even though the Durrānī kingdom was in a state of chaos.

### Events in the Durrānī Kingdom

In 1809, at about the same time that Sir Harford Jones was in Iran, the Governor-General of India sent Mountstuart Elphinstone to Shāh Shujā' in the Durrānī winter capital of Pishāvar. His mission was to make a treaty with the Afghans. The British Government in India believed such a treaty would prevent the feared Franco-Russian invasion of India. Shah Shujā' agreed to an audience. He looked forward to the largess of the British, who he knew had no designs at this time on the Durrānī kingdom.<sup>77</sup>

The Afghans and British concluded a treaty which guaranteed that no Frenchman or Russian would be allowed in the Afghan dominion. Aid was pledged to the Afghans in case of an Iranian attack if it were part of a joint Franco-Iranian plan.<sup>78</sup> This was the first treaty made by a European power with the Durrānī kingdom. The document became virtually useless soon after Elphinstone departed, however, because the deposed Maḥmūd Shāh, who had recently escaped from prison, along with Faṭḥ Khān, the king maker, seized Kābul. Then they marched to Pishāvar and unseated Shāh Shujā'. None of Shāh Shujā''s several attempts to regain the throne during the next few years were successful.<sup>79</sup>

Soon after taking power, Maḥmūd Shāh requested

that Fīrūz al-Dīn travel from Herat to Kābul to confer with him. Fīrūz al-Dīn refused, and by doing so declined to recognize Maḥmūd Shāh as his sovereign. From this period, Fīrūz al-Dīn lost the support of the king and his vizir Faṭḥ Khān, and had to look to the Qājārs for protection.<sup>80</sup> Fīrūz al-Dīn did not have to worry about outside interference in his province for the moment. Russian advances on Iran's western borders occupied the Iranians, and Maḥmūd Shāh and Faṭḥ Khān were trying to regain their lost provinces in India. Thus Herat Province and Fīrūz al-Dīn were left untouched.

#### Attempts to Re-integrate Herat into the Durrānī Sultanate

From the time Maḥmūd Shāh unseated Shāh Shujā' until 1818, the Durrānī kingdom, except for the Province of Herat, was unified under Maḥmūd Shāh, the direct descendant of Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī. Faṭḥ Khān, the son of Payāndah Khān, was again the head advisor. The old coalition ignored by Zamān Shāh in 1793, reinstituted by Maḥmūd Shāh in 1800, and discarded by Shāh Shujā' in 1803, was in operation again.

The damage done by the domestic rivalry, however, had been far-reaching. The isolated Province of Herat remained semi-independent even though it was ruled by Maḥmūd Shāh's full brother. But the renewed coalition between the Bārakzays and Sadūzays kept the rest of the

Durrānī kingdom united.<sup>81</sup> The Bārakzay vizir Faṭḥ Khān appointed his brothers governors of most of the twenty-six provinces and districts of the Durrānī kingdom. Balūchīstān was under Rahīmdil Khān; Purdil Khān controlled Qandahār; Sulṭān Muḥammad Khān, Pishāvar; Shirdil Khān, Bamīyān; and after retaking Kashmīr, Faṭḥ Khān appointed his next eldest brother Muḥammad Qasīm 'Azīm Khān governor there.<sup>82</sup> Only Herat was left undisturbed, but Fīrūz al-Dīn did coin money in Maḥmūd Shāh's name.<sup>83</sup> As head vizir, Faṭḥ Khān was the actual ruler of the Durrānī kingdom, and his goal was to consolidate his power and "restore the country to the splendour and glory of the days" of Aḥmad Shāh.<sup>84</sup> Herat Province was no threat to the Durrānī kingdom so long as it was in the hands of the brother of the king. Fīrūz al-Dīn's minting of coins in his brother's name, which constituted nominal recognition of Maḥmūd's sovereignty, lessened the chances of conflict over his rule.

During Fīrūz al-Dīn's rule, Herat remained a major entrepot of Central Asian trade, and products such as sugar, porcelain, cloth, muslin, spices, leather, and pepper still passed through it. Fīrūz al-Dīn apparently did not take an active part in directing public affairs of the city, but left them in the hands of his vizir.<sup>85</sup> Captain Charles Christie, who visited Herat during Fīrūz al-Dīn's



rule, remarked on the cautious nature of the ruler: "In the present distracted state of Khurāsān, he endeavors to remain neutral, without incurring the displeasure of either of the contending parties."<sup>86</sup> According to Christie, Fīrūz al-Dīn seemed fair in his tax system, assessing Durrānīs at the same rate as the other inhabitants of the city.<sup>87</sup> Of course, this caused discontent among his Durrānī supporters. Christie did not mention the atrocities that other rulers of Khurāsān performed on their peoples, and it is apparent that under Fīrūz al-Dīn the province prospered.<sup>88</sup>

Fīrūz al-Dīn, though not active in the internal administration of Herat, was still considering expanding his province at the expense of the Iranians. In 1816 he made another unsuccessful border attack on Ghūrīyān, the border post he still claimed as his territory. The son of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh, Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā, Governor of Mashhad, marched on Herat to avenge the attack. Again, Fīrūz al-Dīn saw it was more prudent to pay a large ransom than to suffer another Iranian siege.

Again the son of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh demanded the daughter of Fīrūz al-Dīn in marriage, required that the coins of the city be struck in his father's name, and that his father's name be read in the khuṭbah (the religious prayer read in the main mosque, which mentioned the sovereign). Such practices as coinage and mention in the khuṭbah were

indicative of political allegiance. Previously, in 1807, Fīrūz al-Dīn had turned down a similar request, but now his options had narrowed. He had refused to go to Kābul at Maḥmūd Shāh's request, and could expect little help from him. He was in disfavor with the Qājārs, and had no reinforcements coming from Qandahār, as in 1807. Being the cautious, self-centered leader that he was, Fīrūz al-Dīn intended to comply with the request, but the other Afghan leaders in the province would not permit it. They poisoned the messenger that was sent to take the girl.<sup>89</sup>

While the girl was not delivered, Fīrūz al-Dīn reluctantly agreed to coin money in the name of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh and to read his name in the khutbah. From the beginning of Fīrūz al-Dīn's reign, the coins had been minted in Maḥmūd Shāh's name; a change meant recognition of Iranian sovereignty. By allowing the Shah of Iran's name to be read in the prayer, he had submitted to a superior military power.

When the Qājār army raised the siege and departed, Fīrūz al-Dīn petitioned for help from Maḥmūd Shāh in Kābul. He could no longer pretend Herat city and province were independent of either regional empire. The Qājārs had forced him to choose sides. He doubtless remembered that he had given Maḥmūd Shāh only minimal recognition, and recalled his earlier refusal to help Faṭḥ Khān against

Shāh Shujā'. Nevertheless, the decision to rely now on his own tribesmen and co-religionists, instead of on the Iranians by asking for help from Kābul was understandable in light of the conflict of political, cultural, and religious values between Afghan and Iranian.

Fīrūz al-Dīn sent his son, Malik Ḥusayn, to plead his case before the Afghan ruler in Kābul. Maḥmūd Shāh, after consultation with Faṭḥ Khān, decided to help Fīrūz al-Dīn against the Qājārs. At the same time, he saw this as an opportunity to seek revenge for Fīrūz al-Dīn's past actions, and planned to seize him and reintegrate the province into the Durrānī kingdom. Faṭḥ Khān and Malik Ḥusayn started for Herat with an army of 15,000 men. After a brief period of political manipulation and intrigue, Faṭḥ Khān gained control of the city, and put Fīrūz al-Dīn in jail. Unfortunately, Faṭḥ Khān exceeded Maḥmūd Shāh's orders by sending his brother, Dūst Muḥammad Khān, into Fīrūz al-Dīn's women's quarters and harem in search of treasure, and, no doubt, pleasure. Reportedly his brother cut the jeweled waistband off the daughter of Maḥmūd Shāh, and in doing so violated the Durrānī tribal code of Pukhtunvalī prohibiting the touching of another man's women, and at the same time insulted his Sadūzay sovereign.<sup>90</sup> Since Dūst Muḥammad Khān was a Bārakzay, and Fīrūz al-Dīn a Sadūzay, this act created a wider gulf between the

two sub-tribes. It also caused a break between the vizir Faṭḥ Khān and his ruler Maḥmūd Shāh.

Maḥmūd Shāh earlier had instructed his son Kāmṛān Mīrzā, in Qandahār, to proceed to Herat in the event that Faṭḥ Khān tried to keep the city. But Faṭḥ Khān would not relinquish his power. He felt he had put Maḥmūd Shāh on the throne twice, and that the latter's young son was not capable of ruling.<sup>91</sup>

Faṭḥ Khān's first concern, after capturing Herat, was to reassert the authority of the Durrānīs. He declared all agreements made by Iran with Fīrūz al-Dīn void, and sent notice to Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā that Herat minted its coins in Maḥmūd Shāh's name; that only his name was read in the khutbah; and that only he would receive tribute. He then issued a challenge to the Qājārs, again exceeding orders from Maḥmūd Shāh, and went about collecting an army of over 30,000 men to meet the expected Iranian response.<sup>92</sup>

When the Qājārs received the announcement, they hesitated, because they knew they were no longer dealing with the predictable Fīrūz al-Dīn. Nonetheless, they felt their honor was at stake. The Iranians, urged on by a Shī'ah khan, who roused their forces to a fevered pitch, left Mashhad to attack the Sunnī Afghans. The superior fire power of the Afghans forced the Qājārs to fall back,

but the Afghans did not give chase because Faṭḥ Khān had been wounded. Reportedly the Iranians thought they had won the battle and proceeded to Mashhad, where they held a gala celebration. The Afghans returning to Herat praised their own victory, and celebrated their half of the success.<sup>93</sup> With each side claiming victory, the future of Herat Province was as unsettled as ever.

Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh received the news of the battle against the Afghans on the way to Mashhad. He encountered a messenger from Maḥmūd Shāh's son, Kāmṛān Mīrzā, who apparently felt it was necessary to apologize for Faṭḥ Khān's unauthorized actions out of fear of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh's reaction. Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh demanded that Faṭḥ Khān either be turned over to him in chains or blinded.<sup>94</sup> If this were not done, the Shah threatened to invade the eastern highlands.<sup>95</sup>

Kāmṛān Mīrzā returned to Kābul, incensed at Faṭḥ Khān's refusal to relinquish power to him. He told his father of Faṭḥ Khān's actions, and this along with the pleas of Fīrūz al-Dīn for revenge for his violated harem, and the demand by Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh, convinced Maḥmūd Shāh to punish Faṭḥ Khān by blinding him. Kāmṛān Mīrzā returned to Herat, seized Faṭḥ Khān and had him blinded. When the news reached Kābul and Qandahār, the cities, under their respective Bārakzay leaders, revolted against their Sadūzay

ruler. Maḥmūd Shāh fled from Kābul to Ghaznī, and there tried to fight. Forces loyal to the Bārakzays defeated him, forcing him to flee towards Herat. On the way he hoped to force the captive, sightless Faṭḥ Khān to tell his supporters to acknowledge Sadūzay sovereignty, but the old Bārakzay chief refused. The Sadūzays tortured Faṭḥ Khān, cutting off his nose, lips, hands, and feet. Faṭḥ Khān died a horrible death at the hands of the man he had made king, but reportedly never once uttered a sound.<sup>96</sup> This final insane act destroyed the de facto coalition between the Bārakzays and Sadūzays instituted under Aḥmad Shāh seventy-one years earlier. The consensus among the Durrānī tribal chiefs to support the Sadūzays evaporated, causing a break up of the chiefs who had kept the kingdom together. As a result, Maḥmūd Shāh's control of the Afghan sultanate, and Sadūzay rule ended.

Maḥmūd Shāh through his own treachery, made the same mistake as his brother Zamān Shāh and his stepbrother Shujā' al-Mulk, all of whom had failed to keep the loyalty of the Bārakzays. Each failed to recognize the indisputable fact of political life in the Durrānī kingdom--the necessity of the support of the chief of the Bārakzays and his followers.

An examination of the events which took place from 1796 until the death of Faṭḥ Khān in 1818 makes it clear that the Iranian-Afghan conflict over Herat contributed to

the division of the Durrānī kingdom. Rival Afghan forces had banded together to defeat a more despised enemy and thwarted two attempts in the conflict over political control of the eastern Iranian highlands. The struggle for the provinces of Herat and Qandahār remained essentially the same as in the preceding century--a struggle between the rival powers of the Iranian highlands, the Sunnī Durrānīs and the Shī'ah Iranians.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Sir John Malcolm, A History of Persia, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1828), II:183 (hereafter cited as Malcolm, Persia).

<sup>2</sup>Sipihr, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh-i Salātīn-i Qājariyāh, 4 vols. (Tehran: Kitāb Firūsh-i al-Islāmiyāh, 1965), I:81.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., I:81-83.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., I:83.

<sup>5</sup>Mountstuart Elphinstone, An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, 3rd ed., rev., 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1839; reprinted ed. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1972), II:314-315 (hereafter cited as Elphinstone, Caubul).

<sup>6</sup>Emineh Pakravan, Abbas Mirza (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1973), p. 292.

<sup>7</sup>Elphinstone, Caubul, II:314-315.

<sup>8</sup>Lt. Arthur Conolly, Journey to the North of India Overland from England Through Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), II:396 (hereafter cited as Conolly, Journey).

<sup>9</sup>Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1940), II:378 (hereafter cited as Sykes, Afghanistan).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Malcolm E. Yapp, Strategies of British India, Britain, Iran, and Afghanistan, 1798-1850 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 24-26.

<sup>12</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, I:377.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., I:378.



<sup>14</sup>Abd al-Razzaq Dunbulī, The Dynasty of the Kajars, trans. by Sir H. J. Brydges (London: James Bohn, 1834), pp. 106, 120-121 (hereafter cited as Dunbuli, Kajars).

<sup>15</sup>Vartan Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan (Stanford: University Press, 1969), p. 51.

<sup>16</sup>Said Qasim Rishtiya, Afghānistān dar Qarn-i Nūzdah (Kābul: Matba'ah-i 'Umūmī, 1958), p. 9 (hereafter cited as Rishtiya, Afghanistan).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, I:376.

<sup>19</sup>J. B. Kelley, Britain and the Persian Gulf 1798-1880 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 62 (hereafter cited as Kelley, Britain).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Malcolm, Persia, II:215.

<sup>24</sup>Lt. Gen. W. Monteith, Kars and Erzeroum (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), p. 2.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>26</sup>Robert Grant Watson, A History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858 (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1866), p. 94 (hereafter cited as Watson, Persia).

<sup>27</sup>John F. Baddeley, The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), p. 160 (hereafter cited as Baddeley, Caucasus).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>29</sup>India, Foreign and Political Department, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, compiled by Charles U. Aitchison (Calcutta, 1876), VI:378 (hereafter cited as India, Treaties).

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, L/P&S/9/101-105, unpublished correspondence.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>India, Treaties, VI:379-383.

<sup>36</sup>Sir Percy M. Sykes, A History of Persia, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), II:300 (hereafter cited as Sykes, Persia).

<sup>37</sup>Elphinstone, Caubul, II:327.

<sup>38</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:265.

<sup>39</sup>Elphinstone, Caubul, II:327.

<sup>40</sup>Mīr 'Abd al-Karīm Boukhary, Histoire de l'Asie Centrale (Persian copy included). (Paris: Lenoux, 1876), p. 64 (hereafter cited as Boukhary, Histoire).

<sup>41</sup>Sykes, Persia, II:368.

<sup>42</sup>Laurence Lockhart, Nadir Shah (London: Luzac and Co., 1938), p. 264.

<sup>43</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:266.

<sup>44</sup>Elphinstone, Caubul, II:340.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Kelley, Britain, p. 82.

<sup>47</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, trans. and ed., The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: 1535-1914, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), I:184-185 (hereafter cited as Hurewitz, Middle East).

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., I:185.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Frank Maloy Anderson, The Constitutions and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France 1789-1901 (Minneapolis: H. W. Wilson Co., 1904), pp. 405-410.

<sup>52</sup>Baddeley, Caucasus, p. 77.

<sup>53</sup>Kelley, Britain, pp. 82-83.

<sup>54</sup>Hurewitz, Middle East, I:186-188. In Napoleon's orders to the French Ambassador to the Qajar court, he refers to his plans to go through Iran and Afghanistan.

<sup>55</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:269.

<sup>56</sup>Boukhary, Histoire, pp. 44-85.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Dunbūlī, Kajars, pp. 328-329.

- <sup>62</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:269.
- <sup>63</sup>Kelley, Britain, pp. 93-94.
- <sup>64</sup>India, Treaties, XIII:53-55.
- <sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, XIII:54.
- <sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, XIII:55.
- <sup>67</sup>Monteith, Kars and Erzeroum, p. 70.
- <sup>68</sup>India, Treaties, VI:375-396.
- <sup>69</sup>Watson, Persia, p. 165.
- <sup>70</sup>India, Treaties, XIII:61; and Hurewitz, Middle East, pp. 197-198.
- <sup>71</sup>Marvin L. Entner, Russo-Persian Commercial Relations 1828-1914 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965), p. 61.
- <sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 88.
- <sup>73</sup>Charles Issawi, ed., The Economic History of Iran 1800-1914 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 88.
- <sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>75</sup>Sykes, Persia, II:315.
- <sup>76</sup>Baddeley, Caucasus, pp. 141-142.
- <sup>77</sup>Elphinstone, Caubul, I:57.
- <sup>78</sup>India, Treaties, VI:345.

<sup>79</sup>J. P. Ferrier, History of the Afghans, trans. from the original unpublished manuscript by Capt. William Jesse (London: John Murray, 1858), p. 142 (hereafter cited as Ferrier, Afghans).

<sup>80</sup>Boukhary, Histoire, p. 85.

<sup>81</sup>Ferrier, Afghans, p. 145.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>Capt. Christie, "Abstract of Captain Christie's Journal," Appendix to Lt. Henry Pottinger, Travels in Beloochistan and Sinde (London: Longmans, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), p. 416.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup>Ferrier, Afghans, p. 151; and G. B. Malleeson, Herat: The Granary and Garden of Central Asia (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1880), p. 78. Malleeson described the Afghan "occupation" of Herat during this period as "the heavy hand of the rude and uncultivated boor." Malleeson's bias is evident throughout his work and is not corroborated by Christie's eye witness account.

<sup>89</sup>Boukhary, Histoire, p. 86.

<sup>90</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:282.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, II:289.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, II:282.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup>Watson, Persia, pp. 196-197.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Rishtiya, Afghanistan, p. 32; and Ferrier, Afghans, p. 163.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE BREAKUP OF THE DURRĀNĪ KINGDOM AND ITS EFFECTS ON HERAT, 1818 - 1836

##### Sub-Tribal Rivalry in the Afghan Sultanate

When the Sadūzay dynasty effectively came to an end with the retreat of Maḥmūd Shāh from Kābul in 1818, the various areas of the Durrānī kingdom which owed their allegiance to the Sadūzays began to break away. Balkh, to the northeast of Herat, as well as Balūchīstān to the south, and Sindh to the east, declared their independence. Dūst Muḥammad, Faṭḥ Khān's brother in Kābul, had won the capital by default, because the king was in Herat, but was unable at this early stage to reunite the disaffected areas under his suzerainty. For the following eight years, civil war prevailed in what remained of the Durrānī kingdom.

During this period, Herat Province, ruled by Maḥmūd Shāh, the last Sadūzay king to rule over all of the Durrānī sultanate, became an independent "khanate". Qandahār Province, ruled by Dūst Muḥammad's brothers, remained nominally in the kingdom (Figure 4). Herat Province was now vulnerable to Iranian military pressure. Its







rulers were determined to remain independent. Maḥmūd Shāh, along with his son and other Afghan nobles in Herat Province, were unwilling to share power with each other or among themselves. These internal difficulties made Herat a tempting target for Iranian expansion.

Herat's internal political problems began soon after Maḥmūd Shāh reached Herat. He turned over the administration of the province to his son Kāmṛān Mīrzā, who consulted him on political matters, and continued to strike coins as Shah of the Durrānīs and claimed the entire kingdom as his domain.<sup>1</sup> In 1819, Ṣāliḥ Khān (also known as Shāh'pasand Khān), an Afghan noble who had gained the ear of Kāmṛān Mīrzā as his advisor, tried to convince him to launch an attack against Qandahār to retake it from the brothers of Dūst Muḥammad Khān. When Kāmṛān Mīrzā claimed that he did not have enough money, an argument ensued between him and his advisor. Kāmṛān Mīrzā blamed Ṣāliḥ Khān for all the past troubles of his father and himself, though his own indecisiveness was partly responsible for his failures. Together, father and son decided to get even with the advisor by holding him captive and extorting money from him. Kāmṛān Mīrzā carried out the plan and finally released Ṣāliḥ Khān after obtaining a considerable sum.<sup>2</sup>

Determined to take revenge on Kāmṛān Mīrzā, Ṣāliḥ Khān secretly wrote to Herat's dispossessed ruler Fīrūz al-

Dīn, who was living at Mashhad under the protection of Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā Qājār, the Governor of Qājār Khurāsān. Ṣāliḥ Khān offered to take the town of Farāh, south of Herat for the discontented Fīrūz al-Dīn. Farāh was controlled by a supporter of Kāmran Mīrzā and by taking the city, Ṣāliḥ Khān hoped to embarrass Kāmran Mīrzā and regain some of his lost prestige. Fīrūz al-Dīn felt he had little to lose and together with the cast off advisor, marched on Farāh. When he heard that Farāh had been captured by his enemies, Kāmran Mīrzā rushed to Farāh with an army. Ṣāliḥ Khān refused to surrender, and forced Herat's ruler to make a compromise whereby he would control Farāh in return for Fīrūz al-Dīn's reimposed exile in Mashhad.<sup>3</sup> The exact role played by the Qājārs in Fīrūz al-Dīn's attempt to regain power in Herat is not clear. After Fīrūz al-Dīn failed in Farāh, however, he returned to Mashhad under their protection.

The Iranians, since the defeat of their army by Faṭḥ Khān in 1816, had not received tribute from Herat. Kāmran Mīrzā used one pretext after another to avoid payment.<sup>4</sup> As a result, in 1823 the Shah of Iran ordered another attack on the city of Herat. The city withstood the siege, but the Khurāsānī army sent by Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh ravaged the province.<sup>5</sup> Apparently the Iranians were not able to inflict major harm on Kāmran Mīrzā, because three years later, he was strong enough to attempt the conquest

of Qandahār. The political structure of Herat was very unstable; friends of Fīrūz al-Dīn were able to place him back in power while Kāmran Mīrzā was en route to Qandahār.

Even within Sadūzay ranks in Herat there was great dissension over who should rule. Fīrūz al-Dīn lasted in power only eighteen days in 1826, and then was replaced by the sly Maḥmūd Shāh, who convinced the conspirators that he was the rightful ruler.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the game of musical chairs was not over. Kāmran Mīrzā returned from Qandahār and his father refused to let him back in the city, as he had decided to remain ruler himself. Kāmran Mīrzā again hurried to Qandahār to reconcile with the brothers of Dūst Muḥammad Khān. Though he had just fought them, he needed their support. Then he returned to Herat to try to gain control.

Kāmran Mīrzā's attack forced Maḥmūd Shāh to ask his former enemy Ṣalīḥ Khān for help. Ṣalīḥ Khān sent his friend Muṣṭafā' Khān, a local noble, who entered the city with an army. They broke the siege by Kāmran Mīrzā and the Bārakzay brothers from Qandahār. Maḥmūd Shāh now found himself in an even worse situation. He was indebted to his alienated ex-advisor and had an army in the city that gave its allegiance not to himself but to Muṣṭafā' Khān. Muṣṭafā' Khān imprisoned Ṣalīḥ Khān and forced Maḥmūd Shāh from the city. Maḥmūd Shāh and Kāmran Mīrzā somehow

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effected a rapprochement, and through a contact inside Herat gained entry again without a fight. Muṣṭafā Khān soon realized his dangerous situation and vowed to abdicate his position to Kāmṛān Mīrzā if his life would be spared. Kāmṛān Mīrzā agreed for the time being, but soon afterward, in the winter of 1824, executed him.<sup>7</sup>

Political rivalry continued between Kāmṛān Mīrzā and his father over who should control Herat. Kāmṛān Mīrzā decided to seek aid from the Iranians. So he sent tribute to Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā Qājār in Mashhad, in hopes of making an alliance whereby Iranian troops would defeat his father. Kāmṛān Mīrzā very clearly saw that in order to maintain the independence of Herat and to reconquer his father's throne in Kābul, it would be necessary to neutralize any threat from Iran by asking for the assistance of the Qājār court. Partly because of his efforts, the Qājārs did not attack Herat from 1823 to 1833.

Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā responded to the request by sending an army of over 10,000 men to help Kāmṛān Mīrzā.<sup>8</sup> Kāmṛān Mīrzā had already defeated his father, but the Qājār prince left his son in Herat with the troops to await Kāmṛān Mīrzā's return from his campaign against his father. From the time that Kāmṛān Mīrzā reentered Herat, he became undisputed ruler of the province. Maḥmūd Shāh, Kāmṛān Mīrzā's father, was living in exile in Lash (Figure

1) in abject poverty. A year later, in 1827 Kāmṛān Mīrzā took pity on him and brought him back to Herat.<sup>9</sup> The old king died the next year, however, possibly helped to his final reward by poison administered by his son.<sup>10</sup> This made Kāmṛān Mīrzā the legitimate as well as de facto ruler of Herat.<sup>11</sup> Kāmṛān Mīrzā took the title of Shah and laid claim to his patrimony. He struck coins in his own name, the 'ulamā read his name in the khutbah, and he made plans to reconquer the rest of the Durrānī sultanate from his Bārakzay enemies.<sup>12</sup> Kāmṛān Shāh was on good terms with Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā Qājār and did not have to worry about him. Furthermore, the leading and most dangerous Bārakzay, Dūst Muḥammad Khān was so busy trying to consolidate his power in the other parts of the Durrānī kingdom that he also posed no threat.<sup>13</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān by 1826 was able to get recognition from the rest of the Bārakzays as titular head of the kingdom, which had become a sort of confederation of princes of the Bārakzay sub-tribe. Unlike those who ruled before him, he did not take the title "Shah", but simply ruled as Sardār (Lord).<sup>14</sup> His brothers, Shīrdil Khān and Pūrdil Khān, in control of Qandahār Province, however, resisted his rule and considered themselves his peers. The question among the Durrānīs was not whether the Durrānī kingdom still existed, but who should rule it. Dūst

Muḥammad Khān spent the rest of his life trying to reunite the central provinces of the eastern highlands, especially Kābul, Qandahār, and Herat

### War Between the Qājārs and the Russians

From 1818 to 1828 the Province of Herat was in constant political turmoil. Any strong outside force, regional or European, could have taken the area. Fortunately for the Afghans, the Iranians were too preoccupied with a series of conflicts with the Ottomans and the Russians to launch the type of strike necessary to capture the province.

By 1825, political relations between the Iranians and the Russians had deteriorated dangerously. The Qājār court had been waiting somewhat impatiently since 1813 for the settlement of a border dispute with Russia, in the area around Lake Gūkchah (Figure 1). Reports were reaching the Iranian court about ill treatment of Muslims in Russian-controlled areas of their former territory. The Qājārs wanted to send an ambassador to St. Petersburg to work out the details of a settlement, but the Russians demurred. Their apparent 'Abbās Mīrzā tried to negotiate with the Russians to no avail. He even tried to send a representative by way of Constantinople to St. Petersburg, but hostilities broke out between Russia and Iran before the envoy could complete his task.<sup>15</sup>

Religious agitators in Tehran demanded a jihad (holy war) be launched when the Russians eventually occupied the areas around Lake Gūkchah. The Shī‘ah ‘ulamā of Iran pressured Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh to declare war. His own son, ‘Abbās Mīrzā led the pro-war faction, hoping to gain a victory and recognition. Earlier the Russians had tried to convince Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh to declare his first son, Muḥammad ‘Alī Mīrzā as his successor. Thus a campaign would immensely benefit ‘Abbās Mīrzā's chances of maintaining his position. From all accounts, Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh was himself against the war to defend Gūkchah from the Russians, but yielded to the public outcry.

The Russians blamed the British for influencing ‘Abbās Mīrzā to start the war.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the Russians wanted to extend their control throughout the Caucasus, and the only way to do this was to fight the Qājārs. Thus both countries were inclined to fight.<sup>17</sup> After a few initial successes, the war went disastrously for Iran. Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh, never having approved of the war, refused to spend any more money on it, and the Qājār army was forced to retreat.<sup>18</sup> The Russians captured Tabrīz, where the Iranians under British supervision had set up a cannon foundry. Then Tehran was threatened. The two sides agreed on a treaty, but Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh hesitated in paying an immediate indemnity of two million pounds



sterling for fear that the Russians would only use the money to continue their war against Iran.<sup>19</sup> Because Fath 'Alī Shāh hesitated, the Russians prepared to march on Tehran. This forced the Shah's hand, and on February 18, 1828, the Iranians signed a preliminary treaty at Turkmanchay. The terms of the treaty included an indemnity of two million tomans, the ceding of the areas of Erivan and Nakhchivān, acceptance that only Russia would be allowed to have warships on the Caspian, and the provision that Russian consuls or agents could be placed in every town in Iran to facilitate commercial relations. The only article which benefited Iran to any degree was Article 7, which recognized 'Abbās Mīrzā as the heir apparent.<sup>20</sup>

During the war, the British had refused to come to Iran's aid with troops, arguing that the Qājārs had fought an "aggressive", not a defensive war. It is difficult to believe that the Russian occupation of Gūkchah was not considered by the British as an aggressive act. For Britain, however, war in Iran would have resulted in war in Europe, a risk the British were unwilling to take. The British refused to pay the subsidy which was guaranteed by treaty, and forced the Iranians to agree to a payment of 200,000 tomans in return for nullification of the incriminating articles. Iran needed the money to pay the Russians, who would not evacuate Tabrīz unless the Qājārs paid the first

installment of their war indemnity.<sup>21</sup> When the Qājārs received the payment from the British, they immediately handed it over to the Russians.

After the war Iranian hatred for the Russians intensified. The Russian envoy to Tehran, who had come to pick up the third installment of the indemnity along with his legation, was slain by a mob of Iranians led by members of the Shī'ah 'ulamā. Fortunately for Iran, Russia was again at war with the Ottomans and decided to overlook the incident. The year 1828 was decisive for the Iranians. Because of powerful Russia, the Shah and the Crown Prince turned their attention from their western borders and gave up the hope of ever regaining the lost territories in the Caucasus.

#### The Qājārs Again Look to the East

Iran was finally at peace with Russia, after having sustained a great loss of prestige and territory. Now attention turned once again to her eastern border and Herat. As fate would have it, Herat had just ended its internal power struggle. Kāmrān Shāh and his vizir had taken full control of the city after the death of Maḥmūd Shāh. Thus, Kāmrān Shāh no longer had to worry about internal threats to his power.

Qājār intentions to renew their seemingly perpetual conflict with Herat, interrupted by war in the west, now

met stronger resistance than any that could have been offered since the death of Faṭḥ Khān Bārakzay in 1818. The experience with Russia and the financial burden it imposed had embittered them so much that the Qājārs took no overt action against Herat during the next four years. Lack of political conflict between the Iranians and Afghans did not cancel the ever present religious antagonism. Hatred between Shī'ah and Sunnī was so intense that in order to pass through Afghan territory, it was necessary to don a Sunnī style outfit, for anything else was an invitation to disaster.<sup>22</sup>

When Kāmran Shāh came to power, Lieutenant Arthur Conolly of the British Indian Army, who visited Herat during this period, observed:

On his first coming to Herat, Kamraun thought it good policy to be liberal to the peasantry of the province, but when after a few years, he saw the rebels in settled possession of the country which had been so foolishly ceded to them, he became desponding and morose, and rigid in exacting from everyone the dues of that royalty, the name of which only remained to him.<sup>23</sup>

Kāmran Shāh had fought with Fīrūz al-Dīn, Faṭḥ Khān, Muṣṭafā Khān, Ṣāliḥ Khān, and his own father to become ruler of Herat. He grew more rigid and demanding as he gained in power. His personality changed. But he was, in comparison with the Bārakzays, more acceptable to the people of Herat. Claude Auguste Court, a Frenchman who traveled through Herat in 1826, stated that the Bārakzays in

control of Kābul and Qandahār had: "divided the dominions of Mahmud Khan amongst themselves and each chief rules most despotically and cruelly."<sup>24</sup> Kāmran Shāh not only bathed himself in luxury, but he also built up a large war chest to meet any threat to his power from Iran or from Kābul.<sup>25</sup> His earlier cultivation of good relations with the Iranian governor of Mashhad was a shrewd move, and no doubt protected Herat during the years of extreme political turmoil. This was another example of how the Afghans relied on Iranian help when internal support was lacking.

The Iranians, who suffered a bitter defeat at the hands of the Russians, realized the impossibility of trying to regain western territories lost to them. A far easier area for military expansion seemed to be the northeast. Āghā Muḥammad Shāh and Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh had both made previous attempts at retaking the eastern highlands from the Afghans. In Khurāsān, the Qājār dynasty faced a non-European military force armed by traditional means. Chances for success seemed favorable. ‘Abbās Mīrzā, the Crown Prince, was determined to conquer the eastern highlands.

#### ‘Abbās Mīrzā's Preparation for Subduing Khurāsān

In the summer of 1829, for the first time since Iran's defeat by Russia, ‘Abbās Mīrzā reorganized his army in Azarbā‘ījān and held a grand review near Tabrīz on the Plain of Ujān.<sup>26</sup> He assembled fourteen regiments and an

assortment of field pieces. He intended to reduce the powers of the local lords of Khurāsān who had never fully yielded to Qājār authority. At the same time, by doing this he could put an end to the slave trade carried on in Khurāsān by Turkmens and tolerated by Afghans.<sup>27</sup> He was afflicted with tuberculosis, and his military career was nearing an end, but the old dream of extending Qājār control to the Āmū Dāryā and Indus rivers renewed his spirits. Qājār expeditions against the eastern highlands during the preceding thirty years had represented attempts at political expansion in an area they claimed as their territory. Emineh Pakravan comments in her biography of 'Abbās Mīrzā:

Aḥmād Shāh's empire crumbled into the hands of his numerous and disunited descendants. The pretensions of the princes of this family outlived their power. But in the eyes of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh and 'Abbās Mīrzā, who supported one another, these Abdalis were only rebellious vassals; Herat and Qandahār only those fiefs which had risen against Iranian suzerainty.<sup>28</sup>

The Qājār's plans to reincorporate Herat and Qandahār into the empire had to wait, however; Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh could not decide whether the Qājār court should attempt the pacification of Khurāsān so soon after its defeat by the Russians. In addition, his son Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā, now Governor of Kirmān and Yazd, revolted. This postponed any thought of an expedition. Finally, in 1832, after putting down Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā's rebellion in Yazd, Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh gave 'Abbās Mīrzā command of an army to pac-

ify Khurāsān.<sup>29</sup> The British representatives in Tehran tried to convince the Qājārs not to attack the Afghans. They feared that an Iranian attack, even for regional political considerations, would result in increased Russian influence in Afghanistan. Because of 'Abbās Mīrzā's plans to take Khurāsān, the British suspected him of being an agent of the Russians. This was a "great psychological error, however understandable."<sup>30</sup> The British failed to realize that 'Abbās Mīrzā, like his father Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh, was anti-Russian, having been humiliated by them in the last war.

Just as the Qājār dynasty viewed Herat and Qandahār as part of its empire, Kāmrān Shāh Sadūzay of Herat looked on Ghaznī, Kābul, Qandahār, and Pishāvar as his territory, although warfare between the Bārakzays and Sadūzays continued to divide the Durrānī kingdom into several parts.<sup>31</sup> The Bārakzays controlled most of the eastern kingdom, and the Sadūzays ruled Herat Province. Even though political squabbles were rampant within the kingdom, external intervention was still minimal. The Afghans still retained most of their own domain, but now the Iranians threatened the Sadūzay territory in the west, and the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh menaced the Bārakzay territory in the east.

### The Sikh Threat to the Durrānī Domain

Ranjit Singh had formerly been a vassal of the Durrānīs, ruling part of the Panjāb in their name. The chaos in the Durrānī kingdom in 1818 encouraged him to rebel. He wrested control of Kashmīr and the Panjāb, and created a Sikh state. By 1823, his army pushed the Afghans west across the Indus River, and took Atak, Multān, and Dirah-i Ghazī Khān from them.<sup>32</sup> The Bārakzays then declared a holy war against the Sikhs and met them at Naw'shīrah (Figure 1), but were soundly defeated. Consequently, the Sikhs marched on Pishāvar and captured the city, which the Afghans considered a major loss. The Sikhs made its Governor, Sultān Muḥammad Khān Bārakzay, their subject. As a result, Pishāvar became a Sikh possession with the Afghans its surrogate rulers. Ranjit Singh intentionally appointed Sultān Muḥammad Khān governor to increase the conflict among the Bārakzays in the Durrānī kingdom. Even though theoretically Pishāvar was now a Sikh possession, the extent of Sikh interference in the internal affairs in the area was minimal, consisting only of a demand for tribute, which Sultān Muḥammad Khān paid.

Sultān Muḥammad Khān's brother, Dūst Muḥammad Khān, opposed the payment of tribute. Since capturing Kābul in 1826, Dūst Muḥammad Khān was the dominant member of the Bārakzay sub-tribe. He never had enough power, however, to

force his elder brother in Pishāvar to recognize his position or to prevent him from paying tribute to the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh, fearing the growing power of Dūst Muḥammad Khān, forced Sulṭān Muḥammad Khān to send one of his sons to Lahore as a hostage to insure his loyalty.<sup>33</sup>

When ‘Abbās Mīrzā Qājār reviewed his troops on the Plain of Ujān, the thought of conquest in the east must have been tempting. The united Durrānī kingdom, which his father Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh had faced, now was splintered and threatened by militant Sikhs on its eastern borders. The Barakzays in the east were squabbling over what should be done against the Sikhs, and in the west the Sadūzays were trying to consolidate their power in the Province of Herat. Herat seemed to be the logical target for the Qājārs; not only was it the closest area of the Durrānī domain, but its Sadūzay ruler could expect little help from the Bārakzays, their sworn enemies, after the death of Faṭḥ Khān. But though Herat was the closest and seemed vulnerable, it was not ready to be conquered,

#### Yār Muḥammad Khān ‘Alīkūzay Becomes Vizir in Herat

In 1830, Kāmran Shāh named Yār Muḥammad Khān ‘Alīkūzay as his vizir. Yār Muḥammad's father had been the governor of Kashmīr during part of the first reign of Maḥmūd Shāh. Yār Muḥammad grew up in the household of ‘Atā Khān ‘Alīkūzay, Kāmran Shāh's first vizir. When that vizir



died, Kāmṛān Shāh picked forty-year-old Yār Muḥammad Khān as his successor.

Kāmṛān Shāh continued to cultivate friendly relations with Iran through the most powerful Iranian Kurdish chieftain of Khurāsān, Rīzā Qulī, a vassal of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh. By sending an army to assist Rīzā Qulī against the Turkmens, who were dealers in slaves and enemies of the Qājārs, Yār Muḥammad Khān hoped to gain favor with the Iranian ruler. The Turkmens were Sunnīs and made an effort to take Shī'ah captives. Nonetheless, they also took Sunnīs and tortured them until they would admit to being Shī'ah.<sup>34</sup> Kāmṛān Shāh hoped that friendly relations with Iran would make it possible for him to launch an attack against Qandahār to try to regain a portion of his father's lost kingdom without having the Iranians attack Herat in his absence.<sup>35</sup>

Even when Kāmṛān Shāh was trying to gain the favor of the Iranians by helping them against the Turkmens, religious antagonism interfered with his objectives. When Kāmṛān Shāh sent an army to assist the Khurāsānī chieftain in 1830, he also sent his new vizir, Yār Muḥammad Khān as its leader. The army entered Mashhad 6,000 strong, terrorizing the population. The Sunnī Afghans went about the holy city as "cocks on their own dunghills," not missing an opportunity to condemn the heretical practices of the Shī'ahs.<sup>36</sup> Fighting broke out between Shī'ah and Sunnī and

was described by Lt. Conolly:

Some Affghauns (sic) were at noon-prayer in the Gowher Shaud mosque, when an old Sheah Moola, shocked at a form of devotion different from his own, lamented with a groan, that men calling themselves Mooselmauns should pray in such fashion. This produced an angry reply, and probably a retort containing no compliment to the first Caliphs. A crowd of either party collected, swords were drawn, and though no lives were lost blood was spilt.<sup>37</sup>

When the news of the conflict filtered through the city, it closed up tightly, expecting a major confrontation between Afghans and Iranians. The perceptive Afghan vizir, Yār Muḥammad Khān, saw that such an event could subvert Kāmraṇ Shāh's plans and ordered his troops back into their camps to prevent disaster. These events in Mashhad demonstrate that religious and cultural antagonism between the Sunnī Afghans and Shī'ah Iranians at any time could break into the open in the form of armed conflict. Though the Qājārs had not pressed their claims on Herat during the preceding seven years, because of their constant battles with both Turks and Russians, any small incident now could give them the needed excuse to attack Herat. The Qājārs, at the time of this incident, were still occupied with putting down the revolt of Ḥasan 'Alī Mīrzā in Yazd.

Upon Yār Muḥammad Khān's return to Herat, Kāmraṇ Shāh decided to capture Qandahār Province. Kāmraṇ Shāh was in the habit of soliciting funds for his campaigns from the merchants of Herat, especially the wealthy Hindus and Jews.

There were more than a thousand Hindus and over six hundred Jews in the city. Many of the Hindus had left the city rather than pay the tax.<sup>38</sup> The Sadūzay also levied a tax in money and grain on the villages in the province, and issued orders to raise an army to the landlords of the countryside.<sup>39</sup>

The news of an impending attack soon reached Qandahār, and the city prepared its defenses to meet the Sadūzay threat. Kāmrān Shāh hoped to defeat the Bārakzay leaders of Qandahār Province and to reestablish the Sadūzays as the ruling family of the Durrānī kingdom, and thus be in a position to attack Kābul. But Yār Muḥammad Khān saw that an attack on Qandahār would mean a probable unification of the Bārakzays and an increased threat to Sadūzay control of Herat. He counseled Kāmrān Shāh to consolidate his own territory and refrain from attacking Qandahār.<sup>40</sup>

#### ‘Abbās Mīrzā's Ultimatum

Kāmrān Shāh still hoped to maintain peaceful relations with the Qājārs to facilitate his plans against the Bārakzays. He sent Yār Muḥammad Khān on a mission to the Qājār heir apparent, ‘Abbās Mīrzā, who had now moved his army to Mashhad. ‘Abbās Mīrzā warned the vizir that "unless his master acknowledged the authority of the Shah and paid tribute Herat would be besieged."<sup>41</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān refused and ‘Abbās Mīrzā imprisoned him, extracting

two teeth in an attempt to force him to agree to his demands. Eventually, through a payment of a large ransom and an exchange of hostages, Yār Muḥammad Khān returned to Herat.<sup>42</sup>

After Yār Muḥammad Khān's return, Kāmran Shāh refused to agree to 'Abbās Mīrzā's ultimatum. As a result, 'Abbās Mīrzā decided to besiege Herat, but before beginning his attack, he wanted to confer with his father in Tehran. He entrusted the leadership of the campaign against Herat to his son, Muḥammad Mīrzā, and returned to Tehran. The expedition to Herat was the prince's first experience as an independent commander.<sup>43</sup>

The Qājārs were encouraged by the Russians, but the decision to move was their own. Iran considered Herat Province a portion of its own territory, temporarily in rebellion.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, Herat had now been in Afghan hands, except for short periods, for over one hundred years. The majority of the people in the province and at least a third of the people living in the city were Sunnī and loyal to the Durrānīs, not to the Qājārs.<sup>45</sup> Political considerations notwithstanding, the Iranians first decided to capture the border post of Ghūrīyān, which had reverted to Afghan control during Kāmran Shah's consolidation of his position. Unable to take the fortress, Muḥammad Mīrzā proceeded to besiege Herat. It is doubtful whether an Iranian

army that could not subdue Ghūrīyān could take Herat, which had time to prepare its defenses. But the question of the Qājār's ability to take Herat was not settled because word came from Mashhad that ʿAbbās Mīrzā had succumbed to his tuberculosis, thus making Muḥammad Mīrzā potentially the next in line for the throne. The Qājār prince wanted to return to Tehran to make sure his grandfather appointed him heir apparent, and so decided to make a quick settlement with the Sadūzays.

Since the Qājārs were not in a position to demand much, Muḥammad Mīrzā asked only that Kāmran Shāh pay tribute to Tehran and demolish the border post of Ghūrīyān.<sup>46</sup> In return, the Qājārs would remove their army from Herat Province. Kāmran Shāh accepted the proposal. The most significant aspect of Muḥammad Mīrzā's proposal, however, was not what it demanded, but what it failed to demand--the minting of coins in the Shah of Iran's name and the recitation of his name in the Friday prayer at the mosque. The Qājār prince thus failed in his objective to win the allegiance of Herat Province. Before leaving Herat, Muḥammad Mīrzā swore he "would return and revenge his failure in Afghan blood"--a pledge he did not forget.<sup>47</sup>

The refusal of Kāmran Shāh to submit to the Qājārs in 1833 was due to the same political, cultural, and religious differences between Iranians and Afghans which had

caused the breakaway of Herat from Iran in 1717. The Afghans considered the culturally and religiously distinct Iranians as foreigners and oppressors, and considered themselves subjects of an independent Durrānī state. Muḥammad Mīrzā's vow that he would revenge his failure in Afghan blood indicated that to be a failure against the Sunnī Afghans was an unbearable insult. It struck at the myth of Qājār military power and Shī'ah religious superiority. Even though Kāmran Shāh promised to destroy the fort at Ghūrīyān, he never did, and he continued to have his own name recited in the khutbah. The failure of the Qājārs to take Herat strengthened Kāmran Shāh's position and made it more difficult for the Qājārs the next time they attacked the province.

#### Instability in the Durrānī Domain

While Herat Province was temporarily safe from outside attack, what remained of the Durrānī domain, divided as it was, faced a dual threat from the east. Ranjit Singh planned to take Pishāvar completely out of the hands of the Afghans by removing Sulṭān Muḥammad Khān from power. At the same time, ex-Sadūzay King Shujā' al-Mulk, in exile in British territory, made plans to overthrow the Bārakzays and set himself up once more as the Sadūzay king of the Durrānīs.

In January of 1834, with an advance of five months'

pension given to him by a representative of the East India Company, and with the "good wishes" of the British Government in India, Shujā' al-Mulk marched towards Qandahār with an army of over 22,000 men.<sup>48</sup> The ruler of Qandahār, Kuhandil Khān appealed to his brother Dūst Muḥammad Khān in Kābul for support. Dūst Muḥammad Khān raised an army and proceeded to Qandahār after realizing that the British desire for Shujā' al-Mulk's success did not entail military intervention on his behalf. When Dūst Muḥammad Khān arrived at Qandahār, Shujā' al-Mulk was besieging the city. The Bārakzay troops surrounded the Sadūzay and after fifty-four days of fighting and thousands dead, he was forced to flee to Herat with only fifty horsemen. Kāmrān Shāh, suspicious of his intentions, refused to let him enter the city. There was no room for two Sadūzays in the same kingdom. Subsequently, Shujā' al-Mulk returned to Ludhiyānā, into the hands of the British. The victory at Qandahār against the ex-king confirmed not only Bārakzay control over the eastern Durrānī kingdom, but also solidified Dūst Muḥammad Khān's paramountcy over his brothers.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān's military efforts in far off Qandahār made it possible for Ranjit Singh to remove Sulṭān Muḥammad Khān from power in Pishāvar. Dūst Muḥammad Khān then took the title Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Commander of the Faithful, hoping to rally the Afghans in a religious war

against the Sikhs. He did not take the title of king, as many of his supporters feared a continuation of the type of monarchy of the Sadūzay. Furthermore, like the Zands in Iran in the eighteenth century, the Bārakzays did not feel it was proper to claim the royal standing of their predecessor. Indeed, the Durrānī kingdom was in no better shape than before. The Sikhs had annexed Pishāvar and the Durrānī domain was still threatened on both sides by regional enemies, as the Qājārs were actively planning a renewed expedition against Herat.

A few months after returning to Tehran to consolidate his position as heir apparent, Muḥammad Mīrzā became Shah of Iran. Before he died, the old monarch Faṭḥ ‘Alī Shāh had proclaimed his grandson Muḥammad Mīrzā the official heir. The royal family in Tehran rallied behind him, and with additional aid from the British and Russians, he was able to ward off other contenders.<sup>49</sup>

Both England and Russia hoped to increase their influence in Iran. The Russians sought to extend commercial markets in Iran and also in the Afghan domains for political reasons; the British were hoping to prevent an extension of Russian influence and increase their own commercial rights in both countries.<sup>50</sup>

#### British Perception of the Russian Threat

In 1834 a large British military mission was sent



to Iran. British officers, who were to be advisors in training the Iranian army, could not get along with the Qājārs, and had no control over the Iranian military budget or promotions.<sup>51</sup> British influence suffered. The Russians, however, gained favor with the Shah by encouraging his desire to reconquer territory in the east.<sup>52</sup> From the beginning of his reign, the young Shah made plans to resume his conquest of Herat Province:

Seated on the throne of his grandfather...he dreamt of Eastern conquest, openly talked of it in durbar and delighted to dwell upon his prospective triumph over Oosbeg (sic) and Afghan hosts. He needed little prompting to push his armies across the Eastern frontier.<sup>53</sup>

The British were opposed to Qājār expansion. They did not care if the primary motivating factor behind Muḥammad Shāh's desire to capture Herat was to reimpose Iranian rule on a people he considered culturally inferior, religiously heterodox, and in rebellion against their rightful government. What the British Government feared was Russia. The British Foreign Secretary, Viscount Palmerston, sent a dispatch to Mr. Ellis, the British Special Ambassador at Tehran, instructing him to:

...warn the Persian Government against being made the tool of Russian policy, by allowing themselves to be pushed on to make war against the Affghans...Whether Persia is successful or not, her resources will be wasted in these wars and her future means of defense must be diminished.<sup>54</sup>

Palmerston often referred to Iranians in the passive

voice. According to his thinking, they were not the initiators of action but the receivers of orders--pawns in the great game for control of Central Asia between Russia and England. This dogmatic view of the extent of Russian influence in Iran plagued Palmerston's policy during the 1830's and again in the 1850's. He cared little about the regional nature of the conflict between the Qājārs and Afghans. What he saw was the sinister influence of Russia lurking behind every action of the Qājārs. Iranian aims, being of no significance, could be dismissed as utter folly. The Iranians were, in his mind, simple puppets doing what their masters the Russians dictated. It was of no concern to him that the Qājārs had their own territorial ambitions, were not pawns of the Russians, and did not need to be convinced to launch an attack against the eastern highlands.<sup>55</sup>

The Qājārs had launched four attacks against Herat Province in the preceding thirty years, and were determined to take the province and the rest of Afghanistan as their rightful heritage. They were not passive pawns or tools to be manipulated and used by the Russians, but active combatants. The Iranians wanted to balance the European powers at their court by keeping them in a state of continual competition.<sup>56</sup> Indeed they had asked for British as well as Russian support for their campaign in the east. The Qājārs

wanted British officers to take part in the campaign and to provide 60,000 English rifles for their army.<sup>57</sup> Their request of the British for officers and rifles was additional evidence that they were not acting as Russian puppets.<sup>58</sup> It was the British who refused to participate in the campaign and who hesitated in filling the request for rifles. When the Qājārs marched on Herat, the British minister decided not to supply the weapons, hoping to defer their actions. The British were frustrated by Article 9 of the Anglo-Iranian Treaty of 1814, which prohibited them from participating in any war between Iran and the Afghans unless both sides asked for their mediation. British self interest, however, would override their qualms about violating the treaty.

The Qājār court informed the British special ambassador of its reasons for planning an expedition to Herat. Ambassador Ellis, relaying the Qājār position to Palmerston, stated that the Qājārs believed that:

...a large portion of Affghanistan (sic) belongs to the Shah of Persia, and that he was at liberty to decide how he would deal with the Affghans (sic) as being his own subjects.<sup>59</sup>

Palmerston, however, did not believe the regional struggle for control of the eastern highlands was the real cause of the expedition. What mattered was whether the Russians might gain from Iran's actions. Both Palmerston and Ellis

suffered from bad cases of Russophobia. Ellis later sent another dispatch, which elaborated on his fears:

The motive cannot be mistaken: Herat, once annexed to Persia may become, according to the commercial treaty, the residence of a Russian consular agent, who would from thence push his researches and communications, avowed and secret, throughout Affghanistan (sic).<sup>60</sup>

Ellis's dispatch then narrowed in on his attitude towards the Qājār desire to reincorporate the eastern highlands into their empire:

Indeed, in the present subservient state of Persia to Russia, it cannot be denied, that the progress of the former in Affghanistan is tantamount to the advance of the latter, and ought to receive every opposition from the British Government that the obligation of public faith will permit. But while the Russian Government is free to assist Persia in the assertion of her sovereign pretensions in Affghanistan, Great Britain is precluded by the 9th article of the present treaty...<sup>61</sup>

British officials adopted the logic of the above quote as dogma--Iranian expansion equaled Russian expansion. Not only was the premise incorrect, but the adoption of it was even more disastrous, leading to strained relations with the Qājārs, the invasion of Iran and Afghanistan, and long-term animosities.

Palmerston believed that Russia planned to take Iran and had said so in October of the preceding year:

Russia pursues the same system of strategy against Persia and Turkey; she creeps down the Black Sea and wants to do the same down the Caspian and to take both Persia and Turkey on each of their flanks.<sup>62</sup>

But what Palmerston failed to take into consideration was the difference between what Russia wanted to do, and what she was able to do in Iran at that time.

### The Shah's Excursions Against Herat and the Slave Trade

In the spring of 1836, Muḥammad Shāh, the new ruler of Iran, in power only a little more than a year, actively began to make preparations for his second attempt to conquer Herat Province. For this purpose, he gathered a large army. Many of the religious leaders of Iran were demanding the defeat of the Afghans. The British Ambassador, writing in a letter to Palmerston, described the situation that existed in Iṣfahān:

Hajji Ibrahim, one of the great Ispahan Mooshtehids (sic, Doctor of Divinity), has been induced to declare from the pulpit, that an expedition against the Affghans (sic) is a holy war, and that all who fall in it are entitled to the privilege of martyrdom.<sup>63</sup>

But when the Āṣif al-Dawlah, the Governor of Khurāsān, informed the Qājār Shah that a cholera epidemic had broken out in the Herat area and asked him to postpone the expedition, the Shah agreed to do so.<sup>64</sup> The Shah then turned his army north to avoid the epidemic. He launched a campaign against the Turkmens in Khurāsān, who with the cooperation of their allies, the Afghans of Herat, and some rebellious Iranian district governors, had captured hundreds of Iranians and sold them into slavery.

The Russians approved of the new target. While they hoped the ultimate goal of the expedition would be an attack against Herat, they believed the putting down of the slave trade would "confer a great benefit upon Iran and Russia in as much as the subjects of both are carried into captivity by these barbarians."<sup>65</sup> The Russian Minister at the Qājār court, Count Jean Simonich, accompanied the Shah on his expedition, anticipating that it would eventually turn towards Herat.<sup>66</sup>

British Ambassador Ellis did not like the Russian encouragement of the Shah's expedition, but at the same time, he felt that Iran had a right in this case to do what it pleased:

However much we may wish to prevent the advance of Russian dominion in the direction of Khiva, and however anxious we may be to induce the Shah not to enter upon any operations against the Khan of Khiva in conjunction with the Russian government, we cannot pretend to deny the absolute right of both either jointly or separately to adopt such measures as shall protect their subjects from the horrors of being carried off from their homes, and consigned to slavery.<sup>67</sup>

Later, Ellis warned Palmerston again of the results of Iranian expansion to the east, but this time he did not mention the Russians. Instead, he discussed the psychological effect of Iranian expansion on British control of India:

I can not refrain from most earnestly calling the attention of his Majesty's Government, and of the East India Company, to the danger of the Shah of

Persia approaching, either by direct conquest, or by the admission of his right of dominions the frontiers of India; for I can conceive of no evil more likely to unsettle the public mind in the north western provinces and to disturb the general tranquility of our Eastern Empire.<sup>68</sup>

The safety of India was a major concern of the British, and while Britain felt she could counter any Iranian move, the threat of internal uprising and increased Russian economic or political influence in Iran was enough to reinforce the view that the Russians must be responsible for the Qājār designs on Herat. The British continually overestimated the influence of Russia in Iran, and underestimated the intensity of the regional conflict between the Sunnī Afghans and Shī'ah Iranians over the eastern highlands.

The British did not have to worry about the Shah's expedition going too far to the east in 1836. The Qājār army met stiff resistance from the Turkmens, who stopped the Shah's advance on the Gurgān River. Turning his attention to Herat, the Shah sent an envoy to Herat to negotiate a settlement with the Sadūzays. But news of the defeat of the Shah's army had already reached Herat. When the envoy attempted to deny the defeat, the Afghans paraded before him two hundred prisoners the Turkmens had captured.<sup>69</sup>

The Afghans could not be forced to submit to Qājār

rule, but they also wanted to avoid fighting them in the coming year. Since Kāmrān Shāh came to power in Herat, he had tried to avert a Qājār siege, while maintaining his independence. Yet the Qājārs were never satisfied with his token expressions of subservience, and always found a pretext for war. The routine was repeated. Kāmrān Shāh offered the envoy a set of conditions he thought might be acceptable, but which at the same time would preserve his independence. His offer was reported as follows:

You demand hostages. We gave no hostages during the reign of the late Shah and we will give none now. You demand a present; we are ready to give as large a present as we can afford. If, the Shah is not satisfied with this;and is determined to attack us,let him come. We will defend our city as long as we can,and if we are driven from it,it will of course remain in your hands till we can find means to take it back again from you.<sup>70</sup>

The Qājārs would not accept Kāmrān Shāh's proposals, claiming that Herat must acknowledge Qājār control and send hostages as a sign of good faith. The Qājār charge that the Afghans were participating in the slave trade, though valid, was merely the ostensible reason for the planned attack. In the past, Kāmrān Shāh had teamed up with the Iranians in trying to put down the Turkmen raids, even when they were not taking people from Herat. After the renewed Qājār interest in dominating Herat in 1833, however, Kāmrān Shāh overlooked the actions of the Turkmen and even accepted a large income from the illicit



trade. Kāmrān Shāh had little reason to stop the trade to pacify the Qājārs, who had vowed to revenge their 1833 defeat with Afghan blood. The letters from Kāmrān Shāh to the Qājārs indicated that he felt that the increase in the slave trade was a war measure taken against an avowed enemy of his kingdom.<sup>71</sup>

#### The Russians and British Try to Influence the Qajars

Regional political, cultural, and religious differences which caused the Qājār attacks on Herat in 1808, 1816, 1823, and 1833 were evident in the negotiations of 1836. When the Shah's advisors informed him of the failure of the negotiations with Herat, he briefly considered a winter campaign. But the chance of success at Herat against well armed Afghans was limited. After all, the army had just been defeated by a small group of Turkmens. The Shah and his advisers consequently decided to postpone the expedition to Herat until the spring of 1837, and returned to Tehran.

The Russian Minister Simonich, upset by the Iranian decision to return to Tehran, apparently used all of his influence to convince the Shah to attack Herat. The Qājārs refused, accusing the envoy of duplicity. The Iranian vizir Mīrzā Āqāsī told the Russian minister that Russia wanted the Shah's army to go east so the Russian frontier authorities could cause troubles along Iran's

northwestern border.<sup>72</sup> The Russian minister naturally resented the Iranian vizir's remarks. The Qājārs recognized that the Russians had ulterior motives in supporting them, but as long as their support and influence worked to Iran's benefit, the Iranians gladly accepted it. In this situation, when Simonich pressured the Qājārs to maintain an expedition that had little chance of bringing them a victory, the Qājārs refused to listen.

A new British minister was waiting to present his credentials when the Shah returned to Tehran. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, had little confidence in Ellis and believed that his observations were simplistic in nature. He had been anxious to replace him with Sir John McNeill, whom Palmerston sent to Iran in 1835 as secretary to the mission, under Ellis. McNeill had arrived to congratulate Muḥammad Shāh on his ascension to the throne.<sup>73</sup> In February of 1836, Palmerston appointed McNeill Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court. As the Shah was away on his campaign against the Turkmens, McNeill had to wait until December to present his credentials.

Palmerston, mindful of Ellis's earlier warnings about the effect of Article 9 of the 1814 treaty on British actions, instructed McNeill to negotiate a new defensive treaty with Iran. Palmerston was even willing to reinsert the suspended Articles 4 and 5 into the new agree-

ment.<sup>74</sup> He hoped that Muḥammad Shāh would agree to such terms. He also wanted a commercial treaty which would give Britain the same rights that Russia had forced from Iran in the Treaty of Turkmanchay to place consuls anywhere in Iranian territory. When the Shah refused this request, negotiations stalled. Palmerston wanted, in return for the reinsertion of Articles 4 and 5, the abrogation of Article 9, which prevented British intervention in a war between the Afghans and Iran. The Qājārs knew, with ample evidence from the past, that Britain would never go to war with a European power to preserve Iranian sovereignty. Therefore the Shah refused to conclude a new defensive treaty.<sup>75</sup>

McNeill realized that the Iranians were planning to renew their attack on Herat, and like Ellis, had initially written to Palmerston that an attack against Herat was consistent with Iranian policy:

The Persians have it in their power, as it is, indeed it is, consistent with their own views to press Kamran on this side and find for him sufficient occupation in defending himself.<sup>76</sup>

McNeill believed, however, that the Shah was not able to organize an army for a siege of Herat in 1837. He would be proven wrong.

#### Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Asks for Assistance

While the British fretted over Iranian actions and

Russian influence in Iran, Amīr Dūst Muḥammad in Kābul worried about his own regional rivals, the Sikhs. He wrote to the new Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland, complaining of aggression by the Sikhs. He also instructed his vizir, Mīrzā Sāmī Khān, to write to the Shah of Iran and to the Czar of Russia about potential alliances. Though he was more interested in making an alliance with the British, he recognized the possibility of failure and hoped to have an alternative plan of action. Charles Masson, an official British news agent at Kābul, declared that Dūst Muḥammad's contacts with the Shah and with the Czar were only ploys to force the British to help him.<sup>77</sup> The Qājārs, however, actually planned to send an envoy to Kābul.

Earlier, the Bārakzays of Qandahār had sent their own envoy, 'Azīz Khān, to the Qājār court, asking for an alliance and offering to accept a position as vassals regarding foreign relations in exchange for independence in the internal administration of their territory.<sup>78</sup> Though Dūst Muḥammad Khān and his brothers in Qandahār sent separate envoys to the Qājārs, when they arrived at the court, the envoy from Qandahār was subservient to Ḥājjī Ibrāhīm Khān, the envoy from Kābul. While the envoys sometimes acted independently, they gave the impression of acting in union.<sup>79</sup>

The Bārakzay representatives in Tehran were not asking for soldiers or arms from the Shah. In fact, they made a point of asking only for money, since they feared an Iranian military presence in their territory. The Qājārs kept talking of sending an army to assist them, which the Afghans did not want. They did not outwardly object to the Iranians attacking Herat as long as the city would be turned over to them. They felt that such an attack might prevent Kāmran Shāh from attacking Qandahār. But at the same time, they did not want the Iranians to take and hold Herat Province, which they considered Durrani territory.

The rulers of Qandahār also sent a letter through the Russian legation in Tehran to the Czar, asking for his assistance. The important thing to realize about these dealings with the Iranians and the Russians was that they were initiated by the Afghans of Qandahār and Kābul to counterbalance threats from the British, the Sikhs, and the Sadūzays. The Afghans, like the Iranians, were not pawns in the "great game" for control of Central Asia, but competitors.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān did not like his brothers acting without his permission in appealing to the Shah of Iran and the Czar, and warned them that a possible separate agreement with the Shah of Iran could mean the loss of their

independence.<sup>80</sup> Dūst Muḥammad Khān wanted a united front when dealing with the Qājār court, and was anxious to establish contacts with Iran. When he did not hear from Ḥājjī Ibrahīm Khān, he sent Mīrzā Ḥusayn Khān to Tehran with a second message, in which he stated:

Since in former times the chiefs of my family were sincerely attached to the exalted royal house of your majesty, I, too, deem myself one of the devoted adherents of that royal race; and considering this country as belonging to the kingdom of Persia.<sup>81</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān, whose tribe so jealously guarded its independence from Iran, now petitioned the Shah as his vassal--an action resulting from the political position in which he found himself. The former Governor-General of India, Lord William Bentinck, had refused to confer with him because he considered the Durrānī kingdom unstable, and wanted them to clean up their own house before communications took place. He was also preoccupied with opening the Indus to commercial exploitation and had little time for the affairs of Afghanistan.<sup>82</sup> Dūst Muḥammad Khān knew that the Iranians were going to march on Herat and had claims on most of Afghanistan. He wanted to make sure that he maintained his own position; thus sending an envoy to Tehran was a prudent step. Furthermore, his letter to the Qājārs was ambiguous, saying in part:

Although 400,000 families of the tribes of the Affghans, and the neighbouring tribes wear the

collar of obedience in subjection to this sincere well wisher, my inability for the employment and arrangement of this multitude limits my forces...which are...at my capital, Cabool.<sup>83</sup>

His letter indicated that Dūst Muḥammad Khān considered himself an independent ruler, with his own subjects, army, and capital.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān was mainly interested in obtaining help against the Sikhs, who still controlled Pishāvar, so once again he contacted the British. This time he successfully established contact with the new Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland. In his first letter to Lord Auckland, he stated:

I look upon myself and country as bound to it (British Government) by the strongest ties, and the letters I have received from that quarter have all been replete with friendly sentiment and attention, and to the effect that, in the time of need the obligations of friendship should be fulfilled. The late transactions in the quarter, the conduct of reckless and misguided Sikhs, and their breach of treaty are well known to your lordship. Communicate to me whatever may suggest itself to your wisdom for the settlement of the affairs of this country, that it may serve as a rule for my guidance.<sup>84</sup>

In response to Dūst Muḥammad Khān's letter, Lord Auckland dispatched Captain Alexander Burnes to Kābul, ostensibly to work out a commercial treaty, but in reality to convince Dūst Muḥammad Khān to settle with the Sikhs. The Amīr of Kābul attacked the Sikhs on April 20, 1837 at Jāmrūd, where they were building a fort at the entrance to

the Khybar Pass. Though the Afghans were successful and killed the Sikh General Hari Singh, they did not have the ability to follow up the victory by retaking Pishāvar. The Sikhs were stopped at the Khybar Pass, but British help would have been necessary to dislodge them from Pishāvar.<sup>85</sup> Dūst Muḥammad Khān wanted Pishāvar returned to Afghan control as well as protection against invasion of Afghan territory. Lord Auckland did not give Burnes the authority to compromise with the Afghans but told him to check back with him for further instructions when necessary.<sup>86</sup>

While Burnes was making his way to Kābul, the Shah of Iran had already taken action. He sent an envoy, Qanbar 'Alī Khān, on a mission to Qandahār and Kābul to contact the Bārakzays and make an agreement with them. The Iranian envoy arrived in Qandahār long before Burnes reached Kābul.<sup>87</sup> He soon concluded a tentative treaty with Kuhandil Khān with the stipulation that it would become effective only if the sardārs of Qandahār sent one of their sons to the Qājār Shah as a token of their sincerity.<sup>88</sup>

The proposed treaty was an interesting piece of Afghan protocol. In it, the Barakzay brothers of Qandahār promised to be "of service" only to the Shah. In return, Qanbar 'Alī Khān promised that the Shah would: one, hand



over Herat to them if he captured it; and two, that the Shah would not form any connection with other Afghans or interfere in any manner whatsoever in Afghanistan.<sup>89</sup> In February, when he heard about the treaty, Dūst Muḥammad Khān put it in limbo by demanding Kuhandil Khān's son, who was on his way to Tehran, to return to Qandahār. Kuhandil Khān complied, stopping his son at Girishk, well within Bārakzay territory.<sup>90</sup> The Qājār envoy did not go to Kābul, but returned to the Shah's camp, which was not in Durrānī territory.

Thus when Burnes reached Kābul, there were no agreements with the Qājārs to interfere with Dūst Muḥammad Khān's negotiations with the British. While in Qandahar, Qanbar 'Alī Khān sent a firman from the Shah of Iran to Dūst Muḥammad Khān, informing him that his "petition" to the Shah had been accepted, and that he had been enrolled as one of the king's loyal subjects.<sup>91</sup> The Shah had also authorized his envoy to inform Dūst Muḥammad Khān that the Shah would make him ruler over all Afghanistan if he would publicly state that he was a vassal of the Qājārs and send one of his sons to the Qājār court.<sup>92</sup> As Qanbar 'Alī Khān never reached Kābul, Dūst Muḥammad Khān never acted on the proposal. The British news writer in Kābul, Charles Masson, stated that Dūst Muḥammad Khān was insulted by the firman and claimed that he had sent a letter, not a peti-

tion. Dūst Muḥammad Khān's letter indeed suggested a semi-subordinate relationship with the Qājārs, which must have pleased Muḥammad Shāh and added encouragement to his plans for taking Afghanistan. The tone of the letter may have been the result of the over zealous Shī'ah vizir of Dūst Muḥammad Khān, hoping to gain favor with the Shah of Iran, or a calculated gamble to get financial aid from the Qājārs. What is clear is that Dūst Muḥammad Khān pledged fidelity to both the British and the Qājārs at the same time, hoping in the end to secure aid and protection from at least one of them.

An alliance with the Qājārs did not appear practical for Dūst Muḥammad Khān. The Qājār Shah did not give the Afghan Bārakzays money, and informed them that he would soon be in Afghanistan to assist them personally--just the opposite of what they wanted. The Shah instructed Qanbar 'Alī Khān to issue a firman ordering the Sikhs not to interfere with the Afghans. But this carried no weight with the Sikhs, who had no reason to listen to the Shah.

#### Planning for an 1837 Iranian Offensive

In March of 1837, an Iranian army assembled outside of Tehran. Āṣif al-Dawlah, the Governor of Khurāsān, tried to convince the Shah not to go personally on the expedition to Khurāsān, as the kingdom was still not

firmly under his control, and a defeat at the hands of the Afghans would be an open invitation to other rival Iranian princes to topple his throne.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore he argued that a defeat would make the Afghans even more determined to oppose the Qājārs. He urged the Shah to stay in Tehran instead, and send an army to Herat. The Shah argued it was necessary to defeat the Afghans now, and that they would be more intimidated if the Shah himself accompanied the army. This would prove to them that Iran was serious in its efforts to take Herat.<sup>94</sup>

While the Qājārs and the Bārakzays were busy with their plans between 1833 and 1837, the Sadūzay Kāmran Shāh had time to move out of his khanate and extend the control of his government. Troops under his vizir Yār Muḥammad Khān subjugated an area south of Herat Province. This area, called the Sīstān, had formerly been under Durrānī control but broke away during the struggles between the Bārakzays and Sādūzays. Since the Sīstān had once been part of the Safavid Empire, the Qājārs also claimed it. The Qājārs, however, had never been able to establish control over the area. They had been too involved with wars against the Ottomans and the Russians to think much about the Sīstān. The only political tie the Qājārs could boast of with this area was their protection and support of a certain chieftain who promised to recognize the Shah if he

gained power there.<sup>95</sup> Kāmārān Shāh's annexation of the area further poisoned his relations with the Qājārs. Regional political considerations continued to be the main reason for the Qājār actions against Kāmārān Shāh, just as they had been for previous attacks against the eastern highlands.

The British minister was aware of the plans even before the Shah organized his spring offensive against Herat. In a letter to Palmerston written February 24, 1837, McNeill said the Shah of Iran's plans against Herat were contrary to British interest, but he was powerless to stop him:

I very much fear that any remonstrances I could offer would be sufficient to deter the Shah from prosecuting what he regards as a just war.<sup>96</sup>

McNeill realized that the Qājārs were determined to take Herat. He also felt that because of Kāmārān Shāh's actions they were justified in doing so:

Putting aside the claims of Persia to the Sovereignty of Herat, founded on ancient rights and on the professions of allegiance to the Crown of Persia, which have been made at various times by Prince Camran: and regarding the question as one between two independent Sovereigns, I am inclined to believe that the government of Herat will be found to have been the aggressor.<sup>97</sup>

In this letter he did not allude to the Russians pushing the Iranians to conquer Herat. The British feared a

strong, united Iran bordering the subcontinent would be a threat to their Indian empire, because Russia, in the British mind, dominated Iran to such an extent that the expansion of one was synonymous with the expansion of the other. If the Russians could potentially gain from an Iranian action, then that action must be caused by Russian intrigue. Such Russophobic ideas dominated British thinking.

The British did not object to Iran strengthening her own position as long as it benefited Britain, and if possible, proved detrimental to Russia. In April of 1837, the Qājār court decided to send an envoy to Bukhārā to try to negotiate an end to the slave trade and:

...to obtain from the Government of Bukhara an engagement that it would not favor or sanction the passage of Russian troops through its territories.<sup>98</sup>

The Qājārs also wanted to make a defensive alliance aimed against further Russian expansion in Central Asia.<sup>99</sup> The Iranian vizir, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, and an advisor for foreign affairs, Mīrzā Mas'ūd, asked McNeill to appoint someone to accompany the Iranian envoy. McNeill was elated, and assigned Captain John Sheil to go. He did this before writing Palmerston for permission, since such an agreement which was aimed against Russia furthered British interest.<sup>100</sup>

The British were not concerned whether the pro-

posed alliance benefited Iran--only that it hindered Russia. In this instance, the British looked on the Qājārs, not as puppets, but as an independent government following a commendable course.<sup>101</sup> The Iranians were not trying to be pro-Russian or pro-British, however; they were trying to construct regional alliances to contain European expansion in their area. The reality of British and Russian power forced Iran to consult each rival before undertaking what was actually a unilateral action.

By May of 1837, the Qājārs themselves were not sure whether or not the Russians actually supported or opposed their eastward expansion. Mīrzā Mas'ūd, the Qājār court advisor, wrote a letter to the Russian Minister at the court, Count Simonich, inquiring whether the Russian government favored her expansion northeast into Khvārazm and her expansion in the direction of Herat (Figure 1). The Count avoided the Khvārazm matter in his response, but implied approval of the Qājār aim to put down the slave trade in Khurāsān.<sup>102</sup>

The British were consulted also. Just about the same time as the inquiry to the Russians, the Qājār vizir Ḥājji Mīrzā Āqāsī wrote a letter to McNeill asking that some of the English advisors to the Iranian army return to Tehran to accompany the Shah's army to Khurāsān:

My health being feeble, I address you a few  
lines with my own hand to say it is necessary

that Major General Lindsey (Bethune) Ameer-i Tomaun, fulfil (sic) the duties of his rank, and accompany the fortunate armies in the approaching campaign to Khurasan, and chastise the wicked inhabitants of Khiva and Herat.<sup>103</sup>

The vizir also asked that the artillery officers come to Tehran to be with the army. The Qājārs obviously hoped to get both Russian and British cooperation in their expedition to Herat.

Even with the announcement to McNeill that the Iranians were going to march to Khurāsān, the British minister still could not believe the Iranians had either the capital or political stability to do so.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, McNeill replied to the Shah's request for assistance by stating there was an inconsistency in campaigning against both Khīva and Herat. Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī responded that there was no inconsistency in the two goals, for the road to Khīva lay through Herat.<sup>105</sup> But McNeill felt the goals were inconsistent because, while the chastisement of Khīva was in British interest, the taking of Herat was not. To him, Qājār aims were not important in themselves, but only to the extent that they affected the international rivalry between Russia and Britain in Central Asia and thus the security of India.

In June of 1837, correspondence arrived at the Qājār court from Asif al-Dawlah, Governor of Khurāsān, containing a letter and set of proposals from Yār Muḥammad

Khān, Kāmṛān Shāh's yizir. Yār Muḥammad Khān wrote the letter in a polite form, and definitely stated that the Afghan khanates were part of Iran:

It is now sixty years that on the exalted part of that honored Lord nothing but loyalty to the everlasting kingdom (of Persia) has been ascertainable especially towards the present government whose freed man and devoted servant I beg you will be pleased to consider me because the Empire of Persia belongs to our lord the king especially the countries of Herat and Khurasan and Kabul and Kandahar and whether in Tehran or in Khurasan I shall have no other object to seek the protection of the state.<sup>106</sup>

The Shah of Iran must have chuckled to himself as he read Yār Muḥammad Khān's description of the last sixty years of "loyalty" to the Qājārs, as the king had led the last of four unsuccessful expeditions to Herat to impose this "loyalty". Yār Muḥammad Khān, without doubt, addressed the Shah of Iran as his sovereign, and if his words could have been taken for granted, there was no need for a campaign in Khurāsān. But remembering the past, the Shah felt that Yār Muḥammad Khān was only trying to buy time. Letters soon arrived from Kāmṛān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān to the Shah and Ḥājji Mīrzā Āqāsī to reinforce the Shah's opinion. Yār Muḥammad Khān's envoy, Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān 'Alīkūzay, brought the letters to Tehran with the power to negotiate a settlement with the Qājārs.

The letter from the ruler of Herat, who considered himself the legitimate king of the Durrānī sultanate, was



not in any sense submissive. And while framed in a polite form, it maintained the tone of address of an independent monarch. Furthermore, the letter accused Muḥammad Shāh of aggression against the Durrānī territory, and inferred that it was Durrānī restraint at the time of Muḥammad Shāh's father's and grandfather's deaths that preserved the throne for him:

At the time that that ornament of the throne and Crown (Mahomed Shah) seduced by worldly glory had changed the relations of friendship and peace with this well wisher into war and by marching his troops into territories of Herat had indicated his avidity for their conquest, and thus altered that which had been fated, when at length the unpropitiousness of unstable fortune and blackened the banner of the state by mourning for the death of His Royal Highness the late Naib-oos Sultaneh ( Abbas Meerza) and the arms and trumpets had made their lament for their Lord...it was then visible to the whole world what the termination of the affair would have been, if this true well wisher had been hostile to your Majesty, if he had not practised the duties of friendship and regard, and if he had not opened the door of peace and harmony to the well wishers of this kingdom.<sup>107</sup>

Kāmrān Shāh went on to state that at the death of Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh, the Afghans did not attack Iran, did not take advantage of the political situation, nor later did they join with the Turkmens against Iran during the Qājār expedition of 1836. Furthermore, Kāmrān Shāh warned the Iranians that if they had: "It would now be apparent in what condition the victorious troops would have returned from these countries."<sup>108</sup> In closing, Kāmrān Shāh added insult to injury

by inscribing his letter with the signet of the Durrānī kingdom, which bore the inscription: "Shāh-i Dur-i Durrān" --Shah of the Durrānīs.

The letter from Yār Muḥammad Khān, the vizir of Kāmṛān Shāh, to Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī was friendlier in tone, but not submissive as was his previous letter, sent through the Governor of Khurāsān. After it introduced Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān as the official envoy from Herat, the letter: one, addressed the vizir as "brother," thus implying equality of position between Yār Muḥammad Khān and the Shah's vizir; and two, stated outright that Iran and Herat were two different states:

I request you will convey your command to me written with the pen of wisdom, which from your regard for the prosperity of both exalted states (Herat and Persia) will prove agreeable, and I beg you will not renounce this sincere friend.<sup>109</sup>

Even though the tone of the letters from Herat was much different from the tone of the earlier letters, the Afghans indicated a desire to prevent hostilities by working on a compromise solution with the Qājārs.

In their reply to Kāmṛān Shāh, the Iranians decided to ignore his claims and those of Yār Muḥammad Khān. The Shah replied to Kāmṛān "Shāh", addressing him as "Prince" or "Governor" and stating the Qājārs accepted the gifts brought by Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān as evidence of "obedience and submission." Totally ignoring Kāmṛān Shāh's

claims to royalty, he closed the letter by stating:

Now that we have granted permission to Futte Khan to quit our Royal Court, we have given him our commands which he is to convey to that receptacle of dignity...that repository of honor (Prince Kamran) will address us letters, communicating his affairs and intentions which will be honored with our royal favor and consideration.<sup>110</sup>

Evidently the Afghans and Iranians were at polite loggerheads. The Qājārs knew that only force could make the Afghan Sadūzay submit to their authority, and continued preparations for their expedition.

Kāmrān Shāh badly wanted peace and was willing to make a number of concessions to the Qājārs. Using McNeill as an advisor, the Afghan envoy Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān presented the Shah with a series of proposals: Kāmrān Shāh would stop the trade in slaves, pay tribute, supply troops for the Shah of Iran, and give some of his relatives as hostages.<sup>111</sup> In return, he wanted a pledge from the Qājārs that they "would not interfere in any manner whatever in the internal affairs of the territories in his possession and that the Shah consider him as his brother and treat him with regard."<sup>112</sup> The Qājārs rejected these conditions. Kāmrān Shāh's envoy sought recognition by the Iranians of his ruler's royalty. The term "brother", when used in a diplomatic sense by the Qājār Shāh, referred to a fellow monarch of a sovereign country. The Qājār vizir declared the Iranians were not willing to address anyone

who was, in their eyes, a vassal with such a title.<sup>113</sup>  
 The Afghan envoy added that his ruler would refuse to coin money in the Shah of Iran's name, would not say his name in the khutbah, and would not agree to drop the title of Shah from his name--actions which would have officially recognized Iranian hegemony over Herat Province.<sup>114</sup>

Muhammad Shāh did not accept the proposals presented by the Afghan envoy for another important reason. In a letter to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Nesselrode, Minister Simonich stated that the Shah still proposed to march on Herat, as he was under pressure from the religious leaders of Mashhad, who: "asked loudly for the coming of his majesty in order to deliver their co-religionists from the tyranny of Kamran."<sup>115</sup> Simonich tried to talk the Shah into accepting Kamran Shah's proposals, but could not assure the Russian minister that he had succeeded.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, he thought it possible that the Shah would march on Herat that summer. He believed, however, that when the hostages from Kāmran Shāh arrived, the Iranians would stop their expedition and be satisfied with this sign of submission.<sup>117</sup>

It was not until mid-June that the British minister, McNeill, really grasped the main point of contention between the Sadūzays of Herat and the Qājār court in Iran:

It soon became sufficiently evident that the real question at issue between the two parties was the Sovereignty of Herat, which the Shah of Persia claimed for himself but which Kamran Shah was not prepared to relinquish.<sup>118</sup>

In a letter dated June 19, 1837, in response to McNeill's inquiries about a settlement, and specifically the proposals for a settlement made by Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān, the Iranian vizir stated that many of the proposals were only statements of the duties of any of the provinces of the Iranian empire. He then affirmed the major point of contention between the Qājārs and the rulers of Herat, and indeed the rest of Afghanistan:

Throughout the propositions of Futteh Mahomed Khan the designation applied to Prince Kamran is, Kamran Shah. This is precisely the point which is the cause of the movement of troops that these pretensions may be destroyed. Two kings cannot dwell in one kingdom.<sup>119</sup>

McNeill had described the Iranian view of the affairs of the eastern highlands very accurately. But he was forced under the circumstances to declare to the Qājārs that the British Government viewed the Afghans as independent people, and that any attack against them would diminish the "cordiality" between England and Iran.<sup>120</sup> In explaining his action for the British Foreign Secretary, he wrote:

The pretensions of Persia to the sovereignty of Affghanistan appeared to me to be such as we were neither called upon by a sense of justice, nor permitted by a due regard to our own security to sanction or allow.<sup>121</sup>

McNeill also had warned the Qājār vizir that the suspicions of the "British authorities" in England and India would be aroused as to the real motives of the Qajars--implying the furtherance of Russian interests. McNeill thought the discussion of these motives "so abhorrent" that he could not bring himself to mention them in his correspondence with the Foreign Secretary.<sup>122</sup> McNeill threatened that if the Qājārs did not stop their planned expedition, he could use the fear of Russian advancement on the Indian empire to rally official British support in his efforts to block the Qājār move.

#### The British Attempt to Take Advantage of Iranian Fears

McNeill realized that the Shah wanted to maintain friendly relations with Britain. He therefore decided that this was a good time to renew negotiations over the stalled commercial treaty. He felt that he was in a favorable position. He wrote a letter to the Qājār court asking them what "signs of friendship" they had shown England lately, and then demanded a new commercial treaty.<sup>123</sup> He stated his reasons for bringing up the treaty at this time in a letter to Palmerston:

In putting this question I had it in view to renew the negotiations for the conclusion of a commercial treaty at a time when the Shah must either consent to some reasonable arrangement, or by justifying a want of confidence in this government, enable me to press still more effectively and with more appearance of

justice, the objections of the British Government to the proposed attack on Herat.<sup>124</sup>

At first, the Shah balked at making a treaty. So McNeill, on the day the Shah was leaving Tehran, threatened that the British Government had the right to annul the Treaty of 1814, which among other stipulations, prevented the British from interfering in a war between Iran and the Afghans.<sup>125</sup> The Shah relented, agreeing to arrange a commercial treaty in July of 1837 to prevent the British from interfering in the expedition. The Shah made one request, that the word "consul" not be included, as he did not understand all the ramifications of this European word; he preferred the term "commercial agent".<sup>126</sup> The treaty was not ratified until 1841, and probably would have been ratified after the Shah returned from his expedition had it not been for British interference in the expedition, contrary to the terms of the 1814 treaty.

The Qājārs were not deterred from their plans, and on July 23, 1837, the Shah left his camp on the outskirts of Tehran and proceeded on his way to Herat. Before his departure from Tehran, the Russian minister, who felt this expedition would fail, wrote to his government that he had tried to convince the Shah to stop the expedition without success.<sup>127</sup> The Shah was determined once and for all to put an end to the Afghan question by reabsorbing Afghanistan into Iran. This goal, which his great-uncle, Āghā

Muḥammad Shāh; his grandfather, Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh; and his father, 'Abbās Mīrzā, had failed to achieve, was the goal he was determined to gain for himself.

Unfortunately for the Qājārs, this was not a propitious time to launch a campaign against Herat. The province had plenty of time to hear of the Qājār plans, and Kāmṛān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān had prepared for a possible attack. In fact, Kāmṛān Shāh's envoy, Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān, had tried to persuade McNeill to soften his objections to the expedition, as he was sure the Afghans had sufficient strength to defeat the Iranians.<sup>128</sup> Kāmṛān Shāh had made alliances with many of the Sunnī nobles in his territory, and felt confident that the Qājārs could not succeed in their endeavor.

The regional drama for control of Herat Province between the Iranians and the Afghans repeated itself for the fifth time in thirty years, and the tenth time since the Abdālīs of Herat rebelled against Safavid rule in 1717. But this time, Russia and Britain interjected themselves in this regional conflict, and made it the central focus of their rivalry over political and economic paramountcy in Central Asia and the subcontinent. The "Herat Question" conceived by the British in the early part of the decade now matured; but for the Iranians, the "Afghan Question" was now well over a hundred years old. Any attempt to



reincorporate Herat and Qandahār Provinces into Iran now automatically caught the attention of the British. The British felt that for the areas to be in Iranian hands was synonymous with Russian control, as a result of the Russian victory over Iran. Now Britain became the European country opposed to Iranian expansion.

From 1800 to 1828, Russia had been the major European antagonist of Iran; now the characters switched roles. After 1828, it was Britain who opposed Iranian expansion in the east, and Russia who encouraged it. The British role in Afghanistan also reversed itself. Fearing the Russians, the British wanted to set up Afghanistan as their surrogate and a buffer between themselves and Russia.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Colin R. Bruce, II, ed., Standard Catalog of World Coins 1981, 7th ed. (Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 1981), pp. 40-41 (hereafter cited as Bruce, Coins).

<sup>2</sup>Lt. Arthur Conolly, Journey to the North of India Overland from England through Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), II:396 (hereafter cited as Conolly, Journey).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Abd al-Razzaq Dunbuli, The Dynasty of the Kajars, trans. by Sir Harford Jones Brydges (London: James Bohn, 1834), p. 106.

<sup>5</sup>J. P. Ferrier, History of the Afghans, trans. from the original unpublished manuscript by Capt. William Jesse (London: John Murray, 1838), p. 184 (hereafter cited as Ferrier, Afghans).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>7</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:314.

<sup>8</sup>Claude August Court, "Itinerary of a Journey from Persia to Kabul Made in the Year 1826," European Adventurers of Northern India 1785 to 1849, C. C. Grey and H. L. O. Garrett, eds. (Lahore Government Printing, 1929), Appendix II:xxxiii (hereafter cited as Court, "Itinerary").

<sup>9</sup>Arnold Fletcher, Afghanistan Highway of Conquest (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 70.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:316.

<sup>12</sup>Bruce, Coins, pp. 40-41.

<sup>13</sup>Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1940), I:394 (hereafter cited

as Sykes, Afghanistan).

<sup>14</sup>Louis Dupree, Afghanistan (Princeton: University Press, 1973), p. 369.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>John F. Baddeley, The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), p. 155.

<sup>17</sup>Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 87.

<sup>18</sup>Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), II:319 (hereafter cited as Sykes, Persia).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., II:320.

<sup>20</sup>India, Foreign and Political Department, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, compiled by Charles U. Aitchison (Calcutta, 1933), VI:xviii.

<sup>21</sup>Malcolm E. Yapp, Strategies of British India, British India, Britain, Iran, and Afghanistan, 1798-1850 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 105 (hereafter cited as Yapp, Strategies).

<sup>22</sup>Court, "Itinerary," p. xxxviii.

<sup>23</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:16.

<sup>24</sup>Court, "Itinerary," p. xxix.

<sup>25</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:11, 51.

<sup>26</sup>Emineh Pakravan, 'Abbas Mirza (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1973), pp. 268-269.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 278-279.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 292, trans. by author of dissertation.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>31</sup>Charles Masson, Narrative of Various Journeys to Beloochistan, Afghanistan, the Panjab and Kalat, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1842; reprinted, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1974), III:449 (hereafter cited as Masson, Narrative).

<sup>32</sup>Henry T. Prinsep, Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab, reprint (Punjab: Language Dept., 1970), pp. 97-150 and 108.

<sup>33</sup>Ferrier, Afghans, p. 184.

<sup>34</sup>Conolly, Journey, II:41-42.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., I:283.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., I:283-284.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., II:41.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Masson, Narrative, II:374.

<sup>41</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, II:325.

<sup>42</sup>Ferrier, Afghans, p. 176.

<sup>43</sup>Sir Henry Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East (London: John Murray, 1875), p. 48 (hereafter cited as Rawlinson, England and Russia).

<sup>44</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, Correspondences Relating to Persia and Afghanistan (London: J. Harrison and Son, 1839), Ellis-Palmerston (January 15, 1836) Enclosure memorandum, p. 8 (hereafter cited as Great Britain, Correspondences).

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Court, "Itinerary," Appendix II:xxxviii.

<sup>47</sup>Sykes, Persia, II:325.

<sup>48</sup>Mohan Lal, The Life of the Ameer Dost Muhammed Khan of Kabul, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1846), I:158 (hereafter cited as Lal, Ameer).

<sup>49</sup>Great Britain, Correspondences, Palmerston-Bligh (September 5, 1834), p. 3.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Sykes, Persia, II:327-328.

<sup>52</sup>Rawlinson, England and Russia, p. 48.

<sup>53</sup>Sir John William Kaye, History of the War in Afghanistan, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), I:153.

<sup>54</sup>Great Britain, Public Records Office, Foreign Office Archives, 539.2 270.7, cited in J. A. Norris, The First Afghan War 1838-1842 (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), p. 77 (hereafter cited as Great Britain, F. O. 539.2).

<sup>55</sup>Great Britain, Correspondences, Tehran, Ellis-Palmerston (December 24, 1835), p. 5.

<sup>56</sup>Hafez F. Farmayan, The Foreign Policy of Iran: A Historical Analysis 559 B. C. - A. D. 1971 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, Middle East Center, 1971), p. 16.

<sup>57</sup>Great Britain, F.O. 539.2 270.7, p. 77.

<sup>58</sup>Norris, The First Afghan War 1838-1842, p. 79, implies that the fact that they "only" asked for 60,000 rifles was an indication that they were pro-Russian. They also asked for military advisors, but no weapons from the Russians.

<sup>59</sup>Great Britain, Correspondences, Tehran, Ellis-Palmerston (December 24, 1835), p. 5.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Ellis-Palmerston, (January 15, 1836), p. 8.

<sup>61</sup>Great Britain, F.O. 539.2 fo. 8, Ellis-Palmerston (January 15, 1836).

<sup>62</sup>Palmerston-Lord Durham H. B. M. Ambassador St. Petersburg (October 27, 1835), cited in Sir Charles Webster, The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830-41, 2 vols. (London: G. Bell, 1951), II:741-742.

<sup>63</sup>Great Britain, Correspondences, Tehran, Ellis-Palmerston (April 29, 1836), p. 15.

<sup>64</sup>Sipihr, Mīrzā Muhammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk, Nāsikh al-Tayārīkh-i Salātīn-i Qājāriyah, 4 vols. (Tehran: Kitāb Firūsh-i al-Islāmīyah, 1965), II:249 (hereafter cited as Sipīhr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh).

<sup>65</sup>Great Britain, Correspondences, Riach-Ellis (June 16, 1836), pp. 17-18.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., F.O. 60/40 Tehran, Ellis-Palmerston (February 4, 1836).

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., Ellis-Palmerston (February 25, 1836).

<sup>69</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/101, Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (December 2, 1836) (here-

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<sup>71</sup>Great Britain, Correspondences, Fath Muḥammad Khān-Qājār Government (May-June, 1837), p. 45.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (December 30, 1836), p. 24.

<sup>73</sup>Broughton Papers, The Hobhous-Palmerston Correspondences, B. M. ADD 46915, Palmerston-Hobhouse (July 5, 1835).

<sup>74</sup>Great Britain, India Office Boards Drafts, Sec. Dept. to India Vol. O, Drafts to Gov.-Gen.-in-Council (May 18, June 7, 15, and July 7, 1836), Nos. 328, 330, 333, and 338, cited in J. B. Kelly, Britain and the Persian Gulf 1795-1880 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 288.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/101 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (February 24, 1837).

<sup>77</sup>Masson, Narrative, III:403-450.

<sup>78</sup>Great Britain, Correspondences, Ellis-Palmerston (April 1, 1836), p. 11.

<sup>79</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/101 McNeill-Palmerston (December 2, 1836).

<sup>80</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers F.O. XL (1839) Dūst Muḥammad-Qandahār leaders, p. 13.

<sup>81</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/101 Dust Muhammad-Muhammad Shah, Enclosure 9 in McNeill-Palmerston (February 28, 1837).

<sup>82</sup>Yapp, Strategies, p. 219.

<sup>83</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/101 Dūst Muḥammad-Muhammad Shāh, Tehran, Enclosure 9 in McNeill-Palmerston (February

28, 1837).

<sup>84</sup>Lal, Ameer, I:260.

<sup>85</sup>Yapp, Strategies, p. 227.

<sup>86</sup>MacNaghten-Burnes (May 15, 1837) enclosed in India Office Records SL. xxiii, 1st series (August 5, 1837), cited in Norris, The First Afghan War 1838-1842, p. 113.

<sup>87</sup>Masson, Narrative, III:415.

<sup>88</sup>Lal, Ameer, I:266-267.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/101 Tehran, Muḥammad Ḥusayn-Burnes (May 8, 1838).

<sup>91</sup>Masson, Narrative, III:45.

<sup>92</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/101 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (February 24, 1837).

<sup>93</sup>Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tāwārīkh , II:266.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>R. G. Watson, A History of Persia From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858 (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1866), p. 293.

<sup>96</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/101 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (February 24, 1837).

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (April 3, 1837).

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.



<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/102 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (May 2, 1837).

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (May 2, 1837) Mīrzā Āqāsī-McNeill.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (June 3, 1837).

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., Herat, Kāmran Mīrzā-Muhammad Shāh, enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (August 1, 1837).

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., Herat, Yār Muhammad Khān-Mīrzā Āqāsī, enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (July 28, 1828).

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (August 1, 1837).

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Mīrzā Āqāsī-McNeill (June 19, 1837).

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (June 30, 1837).

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Simonich-Nesselrode (May 28, 1837).

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (June 30, 1837).

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., Mīrzā Āqāsī-McNeill (June 19, 1837), enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (June 30, 1837).

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Mīrzā Āqāsī (June 23, 1837).

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Mīrzā Āqāsī (June 2, 1837).

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston Sec. Letter #54 (June 26, 1837).

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Mīrzā ‘Alī (June 23, 1837).

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (June 30, 1837).

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (July 28, 1837).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE 1837 QĀJĀR ATTACK AGAINST HERAT AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS

After several weeks of intermittent marching, the Shah's expedition reached Sabzavār, where five days' provisions, four battalions, and thirty guns were waiting for it.<sup>1</sup> The irregular Iranian army grew slowly as contingents of horsemen and footsoldiers sporadically arrived from all over Iran. Troops from Khūr, Māzāndārān, Fārs, and Azarbā'ījān entered the royal camp. In the beginning, provisions were scarce and members of the army worried whether the expedition would succeed. Muḥammad Shāh, accompanied by his grand vīzir, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, was determined not only to take Herat Province, but also, after a successful attack there, to turn north and subjugate Balkh, Maymanah, and Khīva.<sup>2</sup> Sir John McNeill, the British minister, and Count Ivan Simonich, the Russian minister, stayed behind in Tehran. They both had representatives at the Shah's side: Colonel Stoddart represented British interests; and Mr. Goutte, a Russian translator, those of the Russians.

McNeill's informant, Stoddart, had doubts about

the Shah's chances. The Iranian army would not be in Afghan territory for several more weeks, and undertaking a fall campaign to Khurāsān seemed bad military planning, as it necessitated a winter siege of Herat. No doubt it was to be a long, drawnout campaign. Rumors were widespread in Tehran and other Iranian cities that the Shah would never return from the campaign; the conditions in his army seemed to support the rumors.<sup>3</sup>

During the time of Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī, Sabzavār had marked the farthest point westward of territory claimed by the Afghan Durrānīs.<sup>4</sup> But now the Qājārs held nominal sovereignty over all the territory from Sabzavār to Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām. The Shah stopped at Sabzavār for several days and then marched into eastern Khurāsān. So much had already been reclaimed from the Afghans that Herat Province, to the Qājārs, was just one more area to be re-incorporated into the Iranian state.

On October 18th, when the Shah's forces were near Nīshāpūr, a Russian agent entered the royal camp dressed as a Sunnī. He was traveling under the alias of 'Umar Big, but he was really a Lithuanian, Captain Ivan Viktorovitch Vitkevich, aide-de-camp to the Russian general at Orenburg.<sup>5</sup> Fluent in Turkish and Persian, he was on his way to respond to a request by Dūst Muḥammad Khān, the ruler of Kābul, for aid against the Sikhs. He had stopped in Tehran

earlier to consult with Count Simonich and now carried letters from him and the Russian Foreign Minister Nesselrode. He stayed in camp for three days conferring with the Shah, who afterwards provided him with an escort to the frontier of Iranian territory.<sup>6</sup>

Disconcerted at Vitkevich's arrival in camp, Stoddart immediately informed McNeill in Tehran. The latter relayed the news to the British Foreign Secretary Palmerston. While Vitkevich's trip would have later repercussions for both Iran and the Durrānīs, he would not arrive in Kābul until mid-December, and thus had no recognizable effect on the early stages of the Iranian expedition to Herat. But McNeill, thinking of the long-term effect of such a Russian mission, wrote Palmerston:

I cannot help regarding this Russian Mission to Cabul as an immense stride towards obtaining an influence in the countries bordering on India and however its ostensible purpose, on which I have no information to offer, may be disguised, I cannot doubt that the effect of the establishment of a Russian Agent at Cabul must be seriously detrimental to British interests in India and in the Punjab.<sup>7</sup>

Fear of Russian influence close to British India dominated McNeill's thinking. Other factors reinforced his fears. Czar Nicholas I was in the Caucasus, visiting Erivan and Tiflis--the first time a Russian czar had entered the area since Peter the Great.<sup>8</sup> The Czar had requested that Muḥammad Shāh meet him there for discussion,

but as the Qājār ruler was busy with his own expedition, such a meeting was impossible. Instead, the Shah sent the seven-year-old Crown Prince, Nāṣir al-Dīn Mīrzā, and a delegation of dignitaries to meet the Russian czar. If the Russians really controlled the Iranians, as the British believed, it was not logical for the Shah to snub the Czar. By refusing to meet with him personally, the Shah evinced his independence yet satisfied diplomatic protocol.<sup>9</sup>

On October 18th, the Iranian delegation had an audience with the Czar in Erivan. During the meeting the Russian leader chided the Iranians for their inability to capture the fort of Herat, whereupon one of the Iranian delegates, Amīr Niẓām, likened the situation to the Czar's inability to pacify the Caucasus.<sup>10</sup> One point of contention between the two countries was the battalion of deserters from the Russian army that the Shah maintained as a fighting force. Many of these deserters had been in Iran since the first Russo-Iranian war. Most of them were not Russians, but Poles who had little desire to fight for the Czar. The Russians had, on several occasions, demanded their return, but on each occasion the Iranians had refused.<sup>11</sup> By keeping the battalion in open defiance of the Russian government, however, the Shah flaunted his independence from the Czar. During the meeting in Erivan,

the Czar expressed his displeasure and threatened to recall his minister unless the Qājārs returned the deserters in six months.<sup>12</sup> This very same battalion was now with the Shah on his expedition to Herat. Consisting of only five hundred men, it did not play a crucial role in the campaign.

Before the expedition, the British supported the Shah's right to give asylum to deserters from the Russian army. In a letter to McNeill sent in May of 1836, Palmerston told him to "persuade" the Iranians not to surrender "Polish fugitives from the Caucasus and Georgia", arguing that the Iranians had extended protection to "Russian deserters in the past and which, by its treaties, had a right to do so."<sup>13</sup>

Two Europeans commanded the "Russian" battalion: one of them was a Polish Jew named Berowski; the other, Sāmsan Khān, was a European who had become a Muslim and had lived in Iran for several years.<sup>14</sup> Neither of these men were Russian soldiers or received pay from the Russians. In fact, Berowski was a world traveler whom the British had introduced to the Shah.<sup>15</sup> The Shah found him valuable and appointed him Major-General in his army. Moreover, the Shah had no intention of returning the "Russian" soldiers or discontinuing his campaign, no matter what the Czar said.

This incident is further evidence that Muḥammad Shāh based his advance on Herat on regional political considerations, not because the Russians had told him to do so. Using the battalion was part of his plans. Now that the Shah's army was well inside Khurāsān, the Governor-General of Khurāsān, Āṣif al-Dawlah, the Shah's uncle, joined the royal expedition with his own army and marched with the Shah to Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām. Word had spread about the expedition and many of the Khurāsānīs between Mashhad and Herat fled their lands, nearly emptying the towns of Turbat-i Haydarī, Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām, and Khvāf. The Iranian army reached Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām on October 30, 1837. There they divided the Iranian army into four divisions.

The Shah's plan was three-pronged. First, in order to deny Kāmrān Shāh, the ruler of Herat, support from the Hazārahs whom Muḥammad Shāh had failed to win over earlier, the Shah dispatched an army of 12,000 men and ten guns under the Āṣif al-Dawlah to attack the tribal lands of the Hazārahs northeast of Herat Province. Second, another division, consisting of 8,000 men and six to eight guns, marched towards the Afghan outpost of Ghūrīyān, about forty miles from Herat.<sup>16</sup> Third, another division was sent southeast against the Afghan town of Farāh.

The Shah's advisors debated whether Ghūrīyān



should be attacked or by-passed. Finally they decided that since the object of the expedition was the re-incorporation of Herat Province into Iran, the fort should be taken first and then the army should proceed on Herat in a methodical manner.<sup>17</sup> The Iranians besieged Ghūrīyān on November 5, 1837. The Afghans were out-manned and out-gunned from the start; the division sent to take the fort consisted of eight times the number of soldiers inside.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, after a ten day siege, the fort capitulated.

Shīr Muḥammad, the brother of Yār Muḥammad Khān, the vizir of Herat, was the Afghan commander at Ghūrīyān. On November 15th he surrendered, after being promised that no one in the town would be executed and that he would be honorably treated.<sup>19</sup> Apparently the Shah wanted to show the Afghans that they had nothing to fear from Qājār rule, because all he demanded was that the Afghans of Herat Province and their ruler, Kāmrān Shāh, acknowledge the Shah as their ruler, and recognize that Herat was part of Iran. Muḥammad Shāh's father, 'Abbās Mīrzā, had failed to take Ghūrīyān three years earlier, and with this success confidence in the outcome of the expedition increased in the royal camp. While the taking of Ghūrīyān proved to be an easy task, capturing Herat would be a different matter.

The Iranians did not look on their campaign as an irredentist expedition. According to them, Herat and most

of Afghanistan was in rebellion against their rightful government. Iranians referred to the ruler of Herat as "Prince" and "Governor", and had always sent orders for him to follow.<sup>20</sup> The Qājārs refused to recognize that their dynasty had never physically controlled the eastern Iranian highlands and that the Durrānīs had set up an independent kingdom there ninety years earlier.

The Shah arrived at Herat on the 24th of November and personally went about organizing his camp.<sup>21</sup> The Iranians had dug trenches in several locations around the city and were slowly moving closer to the walls. It was necessary to keep out of direct sight of the Afghans, who were excellent shots. The Shah hoped to convince the Afghans, as he had succeeded in doing at Ghūrīyān, to surrender rather than face a siege or certain starvation, knowing this would create long-term animosities against his rule. Consequently, he did not blockade the city, but left the inhabitants free to bring in supplies.

British agent Lt. Eldred Pottinger, of the Bombay Artillery, was already in the city.<sup>22</sup> The presence of a British officer in the city raised the morale of its Afghan defenders. Pottinger gave advice on how to protect the city, but it was his presence more than anything else that contributed to its defense. He was a visible sign of British support, and thus helped the Afghans persevere in

their defense. The fact that he stayed in the city after the Iranians attacked was a blatant sign that the British had no regard for Article 9 of the 1814 treaty, which prohibited British interference in a war between Iran and the Afghans. Furthermore, it indicated that the British would interfere when they saw fit.

The British minister in Tehran, in fact, was already thinking of ways to force the Iranians from Herat. On November 25th, John McNeill wrote Palmerston that he had received word from Lt. Col. Stoddart that the Iranians had captured and mistreated an Iranian messenger working for the British mission. The victim was 'Alī Muḥammad Big, whom McNeill had sent with the Afghan envoy, Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān, on his return trip to Herat. McNeill had intended the courier to accompany the Afghan envoy only as far as Mashhad, and then to wait there for any messages the Afghans might send from Herat for the British. But the horseman made an unauthorized trip to Herat with Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān, and as McNeill admitted to Stoddart: "was not in the discharge of a public duty" when he was arrested.<sup>23</sup> On his return, the Iranian forces captured him and took the letters he was carrying from the Afghans, claiming they had the right to hold an Iranian subject. He was released after questioning, whereupon he complained to Stoddart of the incident.<sup>24</sup>

Two days after writing Palmerston about the incident, McNeill again wrote the Foreign Secretary. This letter discussed British policy, implying that the incident could possibly be grounds for Britain to pressure the Shah to abandon Herat:

If the Shah should succeed in capturing Herat which, though in my opinion very improbable... I foresee many difficulties... I am disposed to believe that in such circumstances, if we should not be prepared, and I apprehend we shall not, to allow Persia to extend herself over all the countries lying between her present frontier and India, it might probably, in the end, be the economical course, and that which would afford the best prospect of re-establishing our relations with Persia on a footing of confidence and good feeling, to take so decided a line as to leave Persia no alternative but submission to our views. And if such a course should be adopted, it will perhaps be found advantageous to have grounds of complaint, and the claim for redress which I have thought my duty to prefer.<sup>25</sup>

McNeill was trying to collect a number of complaints to justify possible British action to force the Shah out of Herat in case the Shah took it or was about to take it. The courier incident became his first complaint. He went on in his letter about how the Shah was boasting about what would happen when he captured Herat--a situation to be avoided at all costs:

The Shah has openly expressed a belief that possession of Herat would give him such a hold upon England, that she would no longer be able to deny him anything he might demand; for the possession of Herat would give him the power to disturb us in India, or to give passage to our enemies, whenever he should think it proper to do so.<sup>26</sup>

In January of 1838, McNeill received word of another incident, this time at Bū'shahr, involving the British apothecary, Dr. Gerald, and an Indian named Sayyid. Because of this incident, the life of the British resident agent at the port of Bū'shahr was threatened. McNeill suspected that the threat was the work of the grand vizir, Hājji Mīrzā Āqāsī. So he reported the situation to Palmerston and complained to the Iranian court, demanding redress.<sup>27</sup> McNeill was gathering political ammunition to use against the Shah.

In the royal camp, while the Shah was boasting, his army was having difficulties from daily lack of supplies. Lines of communication and commerce between the camp and their supply base in Mashhad were tenuous. Afghans and Tīmūrī raiders attacked and carried off supplies, forcing the Iranians to travel in groups of two or three hundred between the two points. To make matters worse, almost nightly the Afghans left the safety of their city and crept into the trenches, terrorizing, killing, and carrying off many Iranian soldiers. The Afghans would remove their own casualties on such occasions, denying the Iranians any satisfaction, and at times sending the Shah into a rage.<sup>28</sup> Because of the difficulty of obtaining supplies from Mashhad, the Iranians sent out parties to plunder for supplies as far as eighty miles from their

camp, thus increasing opposition of the village population of Khurāsān, many of whom took up arms against them. The taking of Herat was so important to the Shah that he ignored the pleas of his own subjects to stop the pillaging.<sup>29</sup> On November 12th, the Shah remarked that it had taken Nādīr Shāh thirteen months to take Herat, and it was impossible for him to leave without taking it.<sup>30</sup> If he delayed much longer, he would have to send for additional troops. That night, the Heratis killed twelve Iranian soldiers in the trenches.<sup>31</sup>

Adding to the Shah's difficulties were the qualities that made Herat militarily defensible. The city was built on a mound of earth that rose twenty-five to sixty feet above the surrounding plain. A ditch about nine yards wide, filled with water, surrounded the city, which measured one mile in breadth and four miles in circumference.<sup>32</sup> Shaped in the form of a square approximately one square mile in area, it was enclosed by a wall ninety feet high and 250 feet wide at the base. Residents from the many small suburbs had flocked into the city because of the Iranians.<sup>33</sup> While Herat had been stormed on many occasions in the past, the procedure was usually long and very costly for the attackers. This in itself inhibited would-be enemies from attacking, and now hampered the Iranians.

The Shah's army was luckless from the very begin-

ning of their siege. They did not have enough troops and were unable to coordinate them because of petty rivalries among the officers. Even with the "Russian" deserters and "European" officers, they failed to make progress. Herat was vulnerable at points where the walls were old and in disrepair. There was also a large hill on one side of the city behind which an opposing army of 10,000 troops could hide.<sup>34</sup> But none of these weaknesses was sufficient to turn the tide and give Iran the necessary advantage needed to take the city.

Negotiations with the Afghans began on November 13th at the request of the Afghans, whose only desire was for the Iranians to withdraw. An Iranian envoy went into the city to meet with Yār Muḥammad Khān, the Herati vizir, but again the same contentions divided the two sides. Yār Muḥammad Khān offered to give a percentage of the city's revenue for withdrawal, but he steadfastly refused to recognize the Iranians as the masters of Herat:

What is the object of your Shah? It is to take possession of Herat, and to remove Kamran Shah from his place and dignity? This is impossible; for from the time of Shah Ismael, Saffaviah, the sovereignty of the Afghans has descended from generation to generation to Kamran Shah. And the Afghans will never permit any other person to rule over them...so long as a single Afghan remains alive in Herat, it is not possible for any other King to be acknowledged than Kamran Shah. These are our last terms; go and represent them, in order that you may be convinced.<sup>35</sup>

The envoy returned from Herat on December 15th and the

stand-off continued. The night before his return, the Hazārahs, allies of the Afghans, had attacked a caravan coming to the Shah's camp from the cities of Tun and Tabas, and confiscated five hundred camels loaded with rice, bread, and other provisions. With all the difficulties faced by their army outside Herat, the Iranians nevertheless successfully supplied their army with the minimum amount of provisions needed to continue the siege.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the division led by the Āṣif al-Dawlah had reached as far north as Maymanah. This division succeeded in forcing most of the Hazārahs in the region to defend their own land, and thus kept them from marching to the aid of Kāmṛān Shāh.<sup>37</sup>

#### Dūst Muḥammad Khān's Efforts to Get British Help

While the Iranian military situation in Herat had stagnated, the political competition for allies was intensifying. Captain Alexander Burnes's mission had reached Kābul on September 20, 1837 as the Shah's expedition was about to reach Sabzavār.<sup>38</sup> Dūst Muḥammad Khān was attempting to obtain British support against the Sikhs. Meanwhile, according to Charles Masson, a British news writer in Kābul, news came from Herat that McNeill was in contact with Kāmṛān Shāh, who had expressed a willingness to recognize Dūst Muḥammad Khān's sovereignty over Kābul in



exchange for British help against the Iranians. Had Burnes capitalized on this development, Masson believed his task would have been much easier.<sup>39</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān had learned that his brothers were planning to ratify the treaty negotiated earlier in Qandahār with the Iranians. To prevent this, he wrote a letter to them demanding that the son of Kuhandil Khān, who was on his way to Tehran, return to Qandahār. To give his request force, he threatened: "If you will not abandon the intention of sending your son to Persia, you must consider me your enemy."<sup>40</sup> In addition, Dūst Muḥammad Khān reminded his brothers of the old Persian proverb: "Before the antidote (Iran) can arrive from Iraq, the victim of the snake (Sikhs) will die."<sup>41</sup> Kuhandil Khān complied, stopping his son at Giriskh, well within Bārakzay territory.<sup>42</sup> Subsequently, Kuhandil Khān informed his brother:

Your kind letter has reached me, and I was delighted to read it. You wrote to me that nothing has been settled with Mr. Burnes, and you will not fail to inform us of the settlement which may take place hereafter. You further told me that it is an important time, and requires great deliberation to weigh the matters, and that I should also come to consult with you on the subject, on the arrangements which you may make with Mr. Burnes, I beg to say that you have more ability to carry through the business than any other man, and nobody can make objections to the arrangements you may make with him about the welfare of the Afghan government. Believe me that I

will never fail to keep well with you, and do every service to satisfy you as long as I live.<sup>43</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān thought he could obtain aid against the Sikhs, but Burnes had no power to promise any such thing. Negotiations dragged on for months. To add to the trouble, Captain Vitkevich arrived in Kābul in December, but for almost three months, Dūst Muḥammad Khān held off any negotiations with the Russian agent, hoping to come to some terms with the British. On March 6, 1838, Burnes finally delivered an ultimatum to Dūst Muḥammad Khān:

You must desist from all correspondences with Persia and Russia, you must never receive agents from (them) or have ought to do with them without our sanction; you must surrender all claims to Peshawar on your own account, as that chieftainship belongs to Maharaja Runjeet Sing; you must also respect the independence of Candahar and of Peshawar, and co-operate in arrangements to unite your family. In return for this I promise to recommend to the Government that it use its good offices with its ancient ally Maharaja Runjeet Sing, to remove present and future causes of differences between the Sikhs and Afghans at Peshawar...<sup>44</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān was willing to agree to these terms, confident that British intervention on his behalf would force the Sikhs to return Pishāvar. But Burnes refused to put them in writing, because Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, had informed him that the British would never agree to them.<sup>45</sup> Burnes was actually presenting an ultimatum ordered by Auckland. The British were not willing to help the Afghans against the Sikhs.

It was the British refusal to compromise that drove the Afghans towards the Iranians and the Russians. Soon afterwards, Dūst Muḥammad Khān wrote a letter to Burnes setting out his objectives in receiving Burnes in the first place, and then explaining the consequences of his failing to arrive at an agreement:

All the British officers used to say and write that they are the well-wishers of Afghanistan, and my ideas were that you would protect Afghanistan, which includes Herat, Candahar, Cabul, and Peshawar... Mankind have no patience without obtaining their object and as my hopes on your Government are gone, I will be forced to have recourse to other governments. It will be for the protection of Afghanistan to save our honour, and God forbid, not from any ill design towards the British.<sup>46</sup>

A significant aspect of this letter is that it delineates Dūst Muḥammad Khān's perception of what areas made up Afghanistan. To him, Afghanistan included Herat, Qandahār, Kābul, and Pishāvar. This was basically the same territory claimed by all the Durrānīs from the time of Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī (1747-1773).

Burnes departed Kābul on April 26, 1838, and Dūst Muḥammad Khān immediately did two things to protect his own interests. First, he decided to enter into the agreement earlier proposed by the Iranian envoy Qanbar 'Alī, and therefore dispatched his son Muḥammad Azīm Khān to Qandahār to travel with Muḥammad 'Umar Khān, the son of Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār, to the Shah's camp. Second, he

entered into negotiation with the Russian agent Vitkevich, who promised to get financial support for Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>47</sup> Even while doing this, however, he was still hopeful of forming an alliance with the British.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān wrote Lord Auckland again, pleading for aid against the Sikhs, and promising that if such aid were forthcoming, the Afghans would rise up and repel the Iranians from Herat:

If there would be peace on the East and Peshawar restored, through the good offices of the English, the Sudars of Peshawar, Cabool and Candahar might advance to Herat, to save their own honor. They (the Afghans) would behave in such a brave way that no danger could have accrued from the Persians. If the restoration of Peshawar required a longer time it was no harm in saying so, but it was necessary that Capt. Burnes should give pecuniary assistance, that we might be able to protect Herat and if unsuccessful to certainly save Candahar from the Persians.<sup>48</sup>

Auckland would not agree to any alliance with Dūst Muḥammad Khān that would in any way endanger the British relationship with Ranjit Singh. He wanted Dūst Muḥammad Khān to approach the Sikh leader as a suppliant, and nothing less would do.

British unwillingness to help Dūst Muḥammad Khān regain Pishāvar pushed the Afghan into an unwanted alliance with the Shah of Iran. While Burnes had been negotiating in Kābul, Yār Muḥammad Khān had sent Lt. Eldred Pottinger to negotiate with the Iranians. On February 8th, Yar

Muḥammad Khān gave Pottinger permission to visit the Iranian camp. There he met with Lt. Colonel Stoddart and the Iranian grand vizir, Hājji Mīrzā Āqāsī. The vizir would not accept the Afghan proposals, and on the 10th, Pottinger returned to Herat. Pottinger continued to advise the Afghans in Herat on how to drive away the Iranians, but now negotiations with Herat would be conducted by John McNeill.<sup>49</sup> This would be no easy task, for it was about this time that the Iranian army before Herat was reinforced by the return of the Āṣif al-Dawlah from his semi-successful campaign against the Hazārahs.<sup>50</sup>

#### The British Concern for Herat

Four days after Burnes had issued the ultimatum to Dūst Muḥammad Khān, and unknown to him, McNeill left Tehran for the Shah's camp to negotiate personally a settlement between the Iranians and Kāmran Shāh. He had received a letter from Lt. Leech, whom Burnes had earlier sent to Qandahār with promises of financial aid to the Qandahār chiefs if they did not join with the Iranians.<sup>51</sup> Leech informed McNeill that Lord Auckland wished him to go to Herat and mediate the situation. Without waiting for an official request from Auckland, McNeill decided to depart, and wrote the Foreign Secretary that he feared time was of the essence.<sup>52</sup> Lord Auckland, though Leech, had informed

him that the preservation of the integrity of Herat was of vital importance.<sup>53</sup>

In McNeill's letter to Palmerston, he reiterated the seriousness of the situation and his fears of the growing power that Iran could acquire from taking Herat, and the difficulties such a takeover would cause the British in their Indian empire:

I am led to believe that it may be of the very highest importance to preserve the independence of Herat, or at least to prevent its being incorporated with Persia, and that if the Shah should succeed in taking Herat we shall have reason to regret not having interfered to prevent it. It appears to me that success at Herat must inevitably lead the Shah further into Afghanistan, where he will come into collusion with our influence if not with our actual power, and that the possession of Herat by the Shah would therefore probably hasten the time when Persia would be openly opposed to our views under circumstances which would hold out no promise of a speedy reconciliation and at a time when Persia, already in possession of Herat, would have the means of making her opposition to us more formidable as her power to injure us would be immensely increased.<sup>54</sup>

In order to prevent an increase in Iranian power, McNeill went on to state that if the British were eventually going to suffer "the odium of arresting the progress of Persia in the East" it might as well do so at Herat.<sup>55</sup> McNeill, Lord Auckland, and Palmerston all realized that to interfere with the Iranian expedition against the Afghans was contrary to the 1814 defensive treaty with Iran. But under the circumstances, they all felt such action was neces-

sary.<sup>56</sup> Iran was respected as a competitor, not a pawn, in the growing conflict over influence in Khurāsān.

McNeill told Palmerston he believed that if the Shah felt he were unable to capture Herat, he would probably accept the British demands for withdrawal, as this would provide him with a "pretext" to break off his expedition.<sup>57</sup> Why McNeill thought this at the time is not clear. Lt. Col. Stoddart had sent McNeill his journal, where he recorded a conversation between himself and the Qājār grand vizir, Hājji Mīrzā Āqāsī. There was nothing in the vizir's remarks to Stoddart to indicate the Shah was thinking of backing down. Stoddart's report indicated that the vizir was determined to take the province, and if he could not take it, he would destroy it. According to Stoddart, the vizir told him:

This town, the second town in Persia in the time of the Saffavians (sic)...Ispahan the seat of the Shah, Herat the seat of the Valy Ahad (sic: Vali 'Ahd means heir apparent) of Persia, the very ground I set on the property of Hassan Khan Shamloo (a Safavid Governor of Herat) whose house stood where the camel artillery are pitched--this you won't help us to get possession...I will make the dust of Herat fly up to the skies that it will never be of any use to anyone again.<sup>58</sup>

The Qājār monarch at the time had no intention of withdrawing from the siege. The Iranians were still recruiting fresh troops from the western parts of Iran. The Afghans were equally determined to defend their territory, Kāmran

Shāh had requested four hundred muskets from the British and was asking how to go about arranging for the purchase of several thousand more.<sup>59</sup> During McNeill's journey to the royal camp, between March 10th and April 6th, the situation of the Iranian army surrounding the city remained the same. The Afghans still left the confines of the city to gather provisions and terrorize them. McNeill reported that from ten to twenty Iranian soldiers died daily from Afghan fire from the city or from night sorties.<sup>60</sup>

While the Shah was having trouble outside the city, Kām-rān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān were having difficulties within. In order to obtain outside support, Kām-rān Shāh wrote to the Bārakzay rulers of Qandahār. He appealed to Kuhandil Khān and his brother as co-religionists and fellow members of the Durrānī nation:

In religious transactions it is incumbent on the faithful to forget internal animosities, and annihilate the enemies of Islam. Now the enemies of true religion, as well as the honour of all Mussulmans, hoping to injure the believers of Mahomed, have come to conquer Herat. It is reported that the enemies will not be satisfied by possessing Herat and ruining us, but as he (Muhammad Shah) knows Herat to be the foundation and key, he has therefore, first resolved to snatch it from our hands, God forbid that these infidels (Iranians) should become the masters of Herat, if so, it is to be feared that they will cause the destruction of all the countries of Islam. Besides this, all the Dooranee nation is connected with Herat, and the time is come that we should put away internal differences, unite, and boldly drive the enemy from the country, and



not destroy ourselves by disunion...I beg you to behave in such a manner as not to lose the country of the Dooranees, or I should not write to you this. Come quickly and save the honour of the nation.<sup>61</sup>

Kāmrān Shāh and the Afghans of Herat felt that the conflict with the Iranians existed on cultural and religious as well as on political grounds. Just as the Shī'ah leaders of Iṣfahān and Mashhad had demanded holy war in the past to rid Iranian territory of the infidel Afghans, so too, the leader of Herat now called upon the Durrānī nation to unite and fight against the enemies of Islam. Qandahār and Kābul subsequently did not send aid to the Sadūzays in Herat, but they did not send the Iranians much support either. They were as suspicious of them as they were of Kāmrān Shāh. But like Kāmrān Shāh, they wanted to play for as much time as possible.

Kāmrān Shāh's difficulties inside the city were increasing. Many of the Shī'ah residents considered to be spies were sold into slavery. Not even the Shī'ah 'ulamā were spared; Yār Muḥammad Khān put them in jail lest they "should stir up intrigues and dissatisfaction inside the city."<sup>62</sup> Food and money were running low and Kāmrān Shāh's soldiers committed all types of atrocities to get provisions. The Iranians finally blockaded the city, forcing Yār Muḥammad Khān to slaughter horses in order to feed the people.

McNeill Tries to Negotiate a Settlement

By March 22nd, McNeill had reached the town of Kalāt-i Mīzanān, where he wrote Lt. Col. Justin Sheil, a British officer in Tabrīz, that there was no doubt the Qājār court knew which side the British favored:

The fact of Mr. Pottinger's having been in Herat during the siege leaves no doubt on the minds of the Persians that we are favouring them (Afghans) and backing them while Russia is backing Persia, the fall of Herat would be therein...regarded as a triumph over us and so it would be by Russia.<sup>63</sup>

McNeill arrived at the royal camp about the sixth of April. On the 11th, McNeill wrote the British Foreign Secretary that the city was now "completely invested" and that it would be only a matter of time before it fell.<sup>64</sup> McNeill went on to mention that the Governor of Khurāsān, Āṣif al-Dawlah, had entered Herat and personally negotiated with Yār Muḥammad Khān without success.<sup>65</sup>

McNeill was convinced there was unequivocal evidence that Russia and Iran were working together and that Britain had to act to prevent the Iranians from taking Herat. If he needed more "proof" he would soon have it. The Russian minister, Simonich, had left Tehran for the royal camp eleven days after McNeill's departure. Until his Russian counterpart arrived on the 20th of April, however, he worked alone to reach a settlement with the

Afghans.<sup>66</sup>

McNeill convinced the Iranians to let his secretary, Major Todd, conduct negotiations. The Shah agreed to this so long as any arrangements would include: first, renunciation of the title of Shah by Kāmṛān "Mīrṣā"; and second, that Yār Muḥammad Khān come to wait on him in camp. Major Todd entered Herat on the 19th and returned with an outline for an agreement and a letter to McNeill from Yār Muḥammad Khān asking that McNeill go into the city to negotiate a final settlement.<sup>67</sup> Todd brought back a proposal which provided for the restitution of prisoners and the end to plundering. The proposal did not, however, allow for the recognition of Iran's sovereignty over Herat or for Yār Muḥammad Khān's obligation to come to Muḥammad Shāh's camp as a sign of submission.

When the Iranians learned the terms of the proposed treaty, they rejected them and ordered an assault. McNeill struggled to keep the Iranians from attacking, hoping to negotiate a settlement. He convinced the Shah to let him try to talk with Kāmṛān Shāh. The Shah of Iran insisted that McNeill obtain from Kāmṛān Shāh a written acknowledgment that Herat was Iranian territory, and also arrange for Yār Muḥammad Khān to come to him.<sup>68</sup> Admittedly, McNeill was playing an impossible role--the negotiator for all three sides at a peace conference. Above all,

he represented British interests, and he demanded a peace agreement that would maintain Herat's independence--the very thing the Shah had launched his expedition to destroy.

McNeill failed to persuade the Afghans to recognize Iranian sovereignty. Since he did not want the Afghans to submit to Qājār rule, it is doubtful he even discussed it with them. He admitted to Palmerston in a letter that he could not bring himself to discuss the proposal that Yār Muḥammad Khān come to the Shah's camp, and added that he had "arranged with him a draft of a treaty which conceded all the demands of the Shah except that which went to sacrifice the independence of Herat."<sup>69</sup> Therefore, after two attempts, McNeill returned to the royal camp empty-handed.<sup>70</sup> He had failed to obtain the needed concessions, but hoped to convince the Iranians to agree to what he had arranged. He gave Yār Muḥammad Khān and Kāmṛān Shāh 10,000 tomans, instructing them to "repair the damages of the fortifications" and to withstand the Iranian siege until relief arrived.<sup>71</sup> Iranian interests and British interests were poles apart.

When the Iranians rejected his draft, he blamed his failure on Count Simonich, the Russian minister, who had finally arrived at the royal camp.<sup>72</sup> McNeill claimed that Russian influence was behind the "change" in the attitude of the Shah. No doubt Simonich's presence did

bolster Iranian morale since the Russians had not vigorously opposed their expedition nor was it against their interests. Simonich had even distributed a sum estimated as high as 50,000 tomans to the army, but as the siege alone cost the Iranians between 2.5 and 3 million tomans, Simonich's contribution represented less than two per cent of the total.<sup>73</sup> It is doubtful that such minimal Russian help was enough to so quickly change the Shah's mind. McNeill's failure, rather than Russian monetary interference, caused the Shah to refuse his proposal. McNeill claimed that the Shah had told him to settle the affair any way he saw fit, but he had gone to Herat only to obtain the two concessions demanded by the Shah, and returned with neither.

The Shah still wanted to resolve the situation. The same evening that McNeill returned to the camp empty-handed, the Shah wrote him a personal note stating he would stop the assault if McNeill would "undertake on the part of 'Prince' Kāmārān to acknowledge Herat to be Persian territory and bring his highness to camp to wait upon his majesty."<sup>74</sup> McNeill refused.

In retaliation, on April 29, 1838, Mīrzā 'Alī, a representative of the Shah, wrote McNeill, accusing the British of breaking their treaty obligations; stating incorrectly that the Afghans had never regarded themselves

as independent; and that Kāmran "Mīrzā" was placed in his position by the Shah. The advisor went on to accuse McNeill and the other British representatives of working without their government's sanction against Iran:

...That the ministers of the British Government without sanction of their government, with a view to their own interest, will not carry into effect certain stipulations of the existing treaty, but whenever it is to their interest they say that they are ordered to carry them into effect without any bond or obligation from this government.<sup>75</sup>

Throughout the letter, Mīrzā 'Alī insisted that Herat was an integral part of Iran, and that the Afghans were only rebelling against their rightful government. The policy of the Iranians had not changed. They still demanded that the Afghans recognize them as their rulers.

For several days a stalemate continued. Finally, according to McNeill, Hājji Mīrzā Āqāsī, the Qājār grand vizir, verbally agreed to the treaty after some minor alterations.<sup>76</sup> Yet when letters arrived from Qandahar from Kuhandil Khān promising to aid the Shah against Herat, or at least offering his services and announcing his intention to send his son to the royal camp with some troops, the vizir withdrew his support.<sup>77</sup>

McNeill had failed at Herat, as Burnes failed earlier in Kābul, to pressure the regional powers into agreements that were designed primarily to accommodate British self-interest, i.e. agreements formulated to pro-

tect British interests in the Indian empire and to maintain the status quo in Afghanistan and Iran. By refusing to help Dūst Muḥammad Khān against the Sikhs, and by declining to defend Qandahār against the Iranians, the British pushed the Bārakzay rulers of Qandahār and Kābul into an unwanted alliance with Iran. This, in turn, boosted the Iranian resolve to take Herat. Hence the failure at Kābul helped to precipitate the failure at Herat.

On the night of May 14, the Afghans raided the Iranian lines, killing more than two hundred Iranian soldiers and capturing two guns.<sup>78</sup> The next day, McNeill dejectedly wrote to Palmerston. Since he had received no new instructions from the Foreign Office and had not heard from Lord Auckland directly since the previous November, he told his superior he did not know "how far to go."<sup>79</sup> McNeill realized that the Shah was mortified that he had been unable to take Herat. The Afghans' ability to defend Herat had severely wounded the Shah's pride, reported McNeill:

The fact is that the Shah's pride is mortified by his having hitherto failed in reducing the place, and while a sense of the inexpediency of his remaining here gives weight to the arguments I have used, His pride and mortification lead him to seize on every circumstance, however trifling, that is calculated to reanimate his hopes of taking Herat.<sup>80</sup>

But within the next two days McNeill received a letter from Palmerston dated February 12, backing up his actions:

I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that her Majesty's Government entirely approve the course which you have taken, and the conduct which you have pursued in all matters to which these dispatches relate.<sup>81</sup>

After receiving written support from Palmerston, McNeill became bolder in his demands to the Qājār monarch. During a private meeting with the Shah, he presented him with a new set of demands which complicated the situation. Since Palmerston "entirely" approved of what he was doing, McNeill attempted to squeeze out of the Iranians additional concessions which would benefit Great Britain. He gambled that the Shah's resolve to resist British demands would collapse and he would get what he wanted. The demands were as follows: one, that Iran conclude a treaty with Herat and stop interfering in its politics; two, that the Qājār court conclude a commercial treaty with Britain, and give British commercial agents the same rights as other powers; three, that the Iranian responsible for the mistreatment of 'Alī Muḥammad Big be punished, that the vizir apologize for his role in this matter, and that a firman be issued to prevent such incidents in the future; four, that the Iranians publicly renounce their right to seize and punish Iranian servants of the British mission without the mission's consent; and five, that the Governor



of Bū'shahr and anyone involved be removed from office for threatening the safety of the British resident.<sup>82</sup>

The Shah talked at length with McNeill, and then said he could accept the treaty and the demands if McNeill could furnish him with "any pretext which would enable him to withdraw with honour."<sup>83</sup> What the Shah wanted was for England to threaten war and attack him unless he withdrew. This was the "pretext" McNeill had hoped for in his earlier letter to Lord Palmerston. The Shah admitted that it would be almost impossible to keep Herat even if he did take it, and had made a preliminary agreement with Kuhandil Khān in Qandahār to turn over the province to him in exchange for his support against Kāmran Shāh.<sup>84</sup> The Shah said that if he were at liberty to announce that Britain would attack him, "no one, not even the Russians could find fault with him."<sup>85</sup>

At the time, McNeill had no orders or power to make such a statement, and hoped the Shah would simply agree to the treaty out of fear of losing British friendship. In private, the Shah seemed to go along with the notion, but later officially rejected it, demanding stronger language and a written ultimatum, which McNeill could not provide. McNeill wrote:

His Majesty required that the British Government should threaten him if he did not return and further demanded that the threat

should be conveyed in writing that he might, as stated, have it in his power to throw down the document as evidence that he had not lightly abandoned the expedition he had undertaken.<sup>86</sup>

McNeill, to a certain extent, was giving in to the Shah's demand. He did write a letter threatening unspecified actions if the Shah did not withdraw from Herat. But in addition, he threatened action if the Iranians did not agree to all five points of his proposed settlement.<sup>87</sup>

The Qājār Shāh rejected McNeill's demands. He felt that McNeill was "an inexperienced Ambassador and did not know the requirements of religion and state."<sup>88</sup> The Shah had to placate the Shī'ah 'ulamā, who were demanding the capture of Herat. For him it was a difficult situation and he did not feel able to agree to McNeill's terms. The Shah wanted a piece of paper stating that Iran would be attacked if the Iranian army did not withdraw. What McNeill presented him was a long list of demands.<sup>89</sup> As a result of the Shah's negative reply on June 7th, McNeill left the royal camp under escort and headed toward the Turkish frontier, breaking off diplomatic relations in protest. By mixing the Herat matter with demands for a commercial treaty and redress for supposed wrongs, McNeill guaranteed his own failure.<sup>90</sup> His plan had backfired.

McNeill's departure from the royal camp gave the Iranians a free hand in launching an attack against the

city. On June 23rd, the Shah began an all out assault. In spite of military advice from Count Simonich, the Russian minister, the Iranians failed. The Afghans pushed back this major offensive with great loss of life. During the attack the Afghans killed Major-General Berowski and gravely wounded Sāmsan Khān. The all out effort to take Herat failed. According to Sir John Kaye, courageous Eldred Pottinger saved the city.<sup>91</sup> But the city actually survived because of the difficulty of taking it and the bravery of the Afghan defenders. Even Yār Muḥammad Khān, Kāmṛān Shāh's vizir, after hesitating, encouraged his men, and according to the eye witness account of Eldred Pottinger:

...advanced...and finally ventured past the last travers there, seeing the men inactive, he seized on a large staff, and rushing on the hindermost, by dint of blows, he drove on the reluctant. Some, crowding up in the narrow parts, seeing no escape, wildly jumped over the parapet and ran down the exterior slope, making their rush at the same time. The Persians were seized with a sudden panic; abandoning their position they fled outright, down the exterior slope and out of the lower fausse-braye...<sup>92</sup>

Earlier, on the advice of John McNeill and others, the Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland, had dispatched the steamer Semiramis with five hundred sepoy of the Bombay garrison and two six-pound cannons to Khārg Island in the Persian Gulf. Lord Auckland hoped a show of

force would convince Muḥammad Shāh to end his siege of Herat. Palmerston, in London, doubted the effect of such a force and feared the Iranians would realize that there was no backup force.<sup>93</sup> The news of the occupation of the small island reached the Shah about the same time that McNeill finally received a new directive from Palmerston.

On July 16, at Shāhrūd, McNeill received a letter from Palmerston stating:

You are instructed to proceed at once to the Shah; and declare to him explicitly, that the British Government cannot view with indifference his project of conquering Affghanistan (sic). That the British Government must look upon this enterprise as undertaken in a spirit of hostility towards British India, and as being wholly incompatible with the spirit and intention of the alliance which has been established between Persia and Great Britain. That consequently if this project be persevered in, the friendly relations which up to this time have so happily subsisted between Great Britain and Persia must necessarily cease; and that Great Britain must take such steps as she may think best calculated to provide for the security of the possessions of the British Crown.<sup>94</sup>

This directive gave McNeill the ability to provide the Shah the "pretext" he had demanded. With the occupation of Khārg in the Persian Gulf, McNeill could furnish the "threat" and the "attack" the Shah wanted. Palmerston's instructions also made it possible for McNeill to drop the other five demands he had made to the Shah. McNeill had to separate the issues.

After receiving Palmerston's letter, McNeill sent his assistant, Lt. Col. Stoddart, back to the Shah's camp. But instead of sending Palmerston's exact message to the Shah, McNeill took it upon himself to substitute a stronger message "formed on the communication" which the British Foreign Secretary had sent him. McNeill gave the revised message to Lt. Col. Stoddart, telling him to deliver it verbally in Persian, and to give the Shah only the unsigned English version, no matter how he protested. McNeill's revision indicated he felt the Foreign Secretary's letter would not accomplish the intended results, since he had delivered similar warnings before. The Shah wanted a declaration of war, and McNeill decided to provide it. As he wrote to Palmerston:

The terms in which this message is expressed may appear to your Lordship to be stronger and more decided than those I was instructed to employ, but, as His Majesty's Government, when these instructions were written had not yet been acquainted with the treaty negotiated under the mediation and guarantee of Russia between Persia and Kandahar nor with the nature of the proposition made by the Shah to the Heratee government...nor with the circumstances which had forced me to leave the Shah's camp, nor with the failure of the negotiations at Cabool and Kandahar and the return of Capt. Burnes to India, nor with the arrival of the troops from India at Karak (Kharg)--I hope your Lordship will be of the opinion that these important changes in the state of affairs justify me in addressing the Shah in the terms I have employed.<sup>95</sup>

The one thing that McNeill did not mention as a reason for

the change in message was the most important, and appears throughout his communications with the Qājār Shah--his demand for a "pretext".<sup>96</sup>

Stoddart arrived at the Shah's camp on August 11, and the following day the Shah received him in an official audience. Stoddart delivered the oral message. In the middle of the speech the Shah asked him: "The fact is, if I don't leave Herat, there will be war, is that not it?" Stoddart replied: "It is war; all depends on your Majesty's answer."<sup>97</sup> As ordered by McNeill, Stoddart finally gave the Shah what he had demanded two months earlier--a "pretext" to leave Herat. The written message given to the Shah did not contain the word "war", but was stronger than any previous message. While Stoddart still demanded reparations for the maltreatment of the servant, there was no longer a demand for a commercial treaty or an apology from the vizir, or a pledge from Iran not to interfere with Iranian employees of the British mission.<sup>98</sup>

The ultimatum came at an opportune time, for the Shah's army's morale was at its lowest point, and the Russians, though full of promises, had made no substantial contribution.<sup>99</sup> The Iranians could not cooperate with one another, and the condition of their army was daily growing worse. They also did not have enough food or supplies to last much longer.

Muhammad Shāh could not retreat if his subjects thought the Afghans had played a major role in the action. This would be too great a loss of prestige and a blow to the stability of his rule. The ultimatum gave him the opportunity to blame his defeat on a declaration of war from the British. He did not want to admit that after almost ten months of ineffective warfare against the Sunnī Sadūzay Afghans that he had been defeated because the city had held out.<sup>100</sup> The display of force in the Persian Gulf probably had little military impact. The disastrous attack on Herat on June 23 and McNeill's message convinced the Shah to act.<sup>101</sup> On August 14, 1838, Muhammad Shāh informed the British:

We consent to the whole of the demands of the British Government. We will not go to war. Were it not for friendship, we should not return from before Herat. Had we known that our coming here might risk the loss of their friendship, we certainly would not have come at all.<sup>102</sup>

There is no question that British intervention gave the Shah an acceptable excuse to end the siege of Herat. But in an age when European cultural superiority was assumed, the British could not conceive of the possibility that Iranians and Afghans had involved themselves in an intricate political and military conflict without European instigation. The British could not comprehend that the siege of Herat was the result of long-standing political, cultural, and religious antagonism between Iranians

and Afghans. The British acted because they feared Russia and the effect of an Iranian victory on the Indian empire. They not only alienated the Iranians by their actions, but also the Bārakzays of Kābul and Qandahār.

Russia and Britain played significant roles in the events involving the Province of Herat in 1837-1838. But this involvement was secondary, as neither power controlled events. The primary motivating factor which led to the conflict over the province was the underlying desire of the Iranians to re-incorporate Herat and the rest of the eastern Iranian highlands into a Shī'ah Iranian state. The conflict over Herat Province was in no way settled by the withdrawal of Iranian forces. Iran still claimed the province and later went to war over it. The Sadūzays maintained their independence and refused to recognize Iranian suzerainty.



### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/104, Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (September 28, 1837), (hereafter cited as Great Britain with reel number).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (October 30, 1837).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (November 1, 1837), enclosure Rawlinson-McNeill.

<sup>4</sup>Ganda Singh, Ahmad Shah Durrani (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1959), p. 95. Cites Abdul Ḥasan Ibn Muḥammad Amīn Gulīstānī, Mujmil-ut-Tavārīkh, pp. 93-94.

<sup>5</sup>Melvin Milton Kessler, "Ivan Viktorovitch Vitkevich 1806-39: A Tsarist Agent in Central Asia," (Washington, D.C.: Central Asian Collectanea, 1960), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/104, near Nishapur, Stoddart-McNeill (October 30, 1837).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (October 30, 1837).

<sup>8</sup>John F. Baddeley, The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908), pp. 311-312 (hereafter cited as Baddeley, Caucasus).

<sup>9</sup>Sipihr, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh-i Salāṭīn-i Qājārīyah, 4 vols. (Tehran: Kitāb Firūsh-i al-Islāmīyah, 1965), II:261-262 (hereafter cited as Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. Amīr Nizam later became Amir Kabir, the famous grand vizir.

<sup>11</sup>Baddeley, Caucasus, pp. 311-312.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.; and Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105, Erzerum, Col. Willbraham-McNeill (November 13, 1837).

<sup>13</sup>Broadlands Mss., Palmerston Papers, London, The Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission, BD/DE/4, London, Palmerston-McNeill (May, 1836).

<sup>14</sup>Joseph Wolff, A Mission to Bokhara, ed. by Guy Wint (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), pp. 97-98. Ed. from Joseph Wolff's Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara in the years 1843-1845 (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1852).

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/104 Sulaymaniyah, McNeill-Palmerston (November 24, 1837).

<sup>17</sup>Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh , IV:267-269.

<sup>18</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105, Journal of Mirza Agha, enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (February 23, 1838).

<sup>19</sup>Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh , IV:267-269.

<sup>20</sup>Charles Masson, Narrative of Various Journeys to Beloochistan, Afghanistan, the Panjab and Kalat, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1842; reprinted Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1974), III:415-416 (hereafter cited as Masson, Narrative).

<sup>21</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105, Journal of Mirza Agha, enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (February 23, 1838).

<sup>22</sup>John William Kaye, History of the War in Afghanistan, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), I:211-299. Kaye cites a manuscript of a journal kept by Eldred Pottinger which since has been lost.

<sup>23</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/104 Tehran, McNeill-Stoddart (November 25, 1837).

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, Sulaymānīyah, Stoddart-McNeill (November 25, 1837).

<sup>25</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office, 539.1, Confidential

Prints, Sulaymanīyah, McNeill-Palmerston (November 27, 1837), p. 11.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., Bū'shahr, MacKenzie-McNeill (December 27, 1837).

<sup>28</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105, Journal of Mīrzā Āghā, enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston February 23, 1838).

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>D'Arcy Todd, "Report of a Journey from Herat to Simla Via Candahar, Cabul and the Panjab Undertaken in the year 1839," Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (May, 1844), p. 341 (hereafter cited as Todd, "Report").

<sup>33</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/104 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (October 26, 1837).

<sup>34</sup>Todd, "Report," p. 341.

<sup>35</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105 Tehran, Journal of Mirza Agha, enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (February 23, 1838).

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (February 23, 1838).

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Foreign Office, XXV, 1859 (September 24, 1837), II:30 (hereafter cited as Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers).

<sup>39</sup>Masson, Narrative, IV:448-450.

<sup>40</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, II:30.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., II:119 (received January 15, 1838 in Kabul).

<sup>44</sup>Louis Dupree, Afghanistan (Princeton: University Press, 1973), p. 371, cites Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers (1859) XXV, II:177 (March 6, 1838).

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., II:180.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., II:223, Dūst Muḥammad-Burnes (April 23, 1838).

<sup>47</sup>Masson, Narrative, III:481-482.

<sup>48</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/5/372 Kabul, Dust Muhammad-Auckland (April 28, 1838).

<sup>49</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (March 8, 1838).

<sup>50</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Pottinger-Leech (February 23, 1838).

<sup>51</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105 Qandahar, Leech-McNeill (January 18, 1838); and Parliamentary Papers, Kābul, Burnes-Leech (December 25, 1837), II:95.

<sup>52</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (March 8, 1838).

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., Qandahār, Leech-McNeill (January 18, 1838).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (February 23, 1838).

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>J. A. Norris, The First Afghan War 1838-1842

(Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 102-137.

<sup>57</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/105 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (February 23, 1838).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., extract of Col. Stoddart's Journal, enclosure in McNeill-Palmerston (February 27, 1838).

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Herat, Faṭḥ Muḥammad Khān-McNeill (January 1, 1838).

<sup>60</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/106 Camp before Herat, McNeill-Palmerston (April 11, 1838).

<sup>61</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Burnes-MacNaghten, II:118 (translation done by British has not been altered).

<sup>62</sup>Kaye, History of the War in Afghanistan, I:217.

<sup>63</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/106 Camp before Herat, McNeill-Sheil (March 22, 1838).

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Camp near Herat, McNeill-Palmerston (April 11, 1838).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (May 12, 1838).

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Hasan-i Fasai, History of Persia Under Qajar Rule, trans. and ed. by Heribert Busse (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 258-259 (hereafter cited as Fasai, Persia). See also Denis Wright, The English Amongst the Persians (London: Heinemann Co., 1977), p. 58.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/106 Camp near Herat, McNeill-Palmerston (May 12, 1838).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., enclosure McNeill-Palmerston, Mirza 'Ali-McNeill (May 12, 1838).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (May 12, 1838).

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (May 15, 1838).

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office Archives, F.O. 539.1, London, Palmerston-McNeill (February 12, 1838) (hereafter cited as Great Britain with F.O. number).

<sup>82</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/106 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston, enclosure (May 17, 1838).

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., McNeill-Palmerston (May 17, 1838). In the confidential print supplied to the Cabinet, Palmerston crossed out "pretext" and wrote in the word "reason" in McNeill's letters to be printed for Parliament, see F.O. 539.1, Camp before Herat, McNeill-Palmerston (May 17, 1838), p. 35; and McNeill-Palmerston, Mashhad (June 25, 1838), pp. 36-37.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., Mashhad, McNeill-Palmerston (June 25, 1838).

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Fasai, Persia, p. 258.

<sup>89</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/106 Mashhad, McNeill-Palmerston (June 25, 1838).

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Arnold Fletcher, Afghanistan Highway of Conquest (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 83.

<sup>92</sup>Eldred Pottinger, "Journal of Eldred Pottinger," cited in John Kaye, Lives of Indian Officers (London: Strahan and Co., 1869), p. 453.

<sup>93</sup>Broughton Papers, The Hobhous-Palmerston Correspondences, Bmmss. 46915, London, British Museum, Palmerston-Hobhous (August 27, 1838).

<sup>94</sup>Great Britain, F.O. 531.1, Palmerston-McNeill (May 21, 1838).

<sup>95</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/107 Camp near Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (July 30, 1838).

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., Royal Camp, Stoddart-McNeill (August 12, 1838).

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>W. K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, 3rd ed., rev. by M. C. Gillett (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 103.

<sup>100</sup>Sir Henry Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East (London: John Murray, 1875), p. 601.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-58.

<sup>102</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/107 Royal Camp, Stoddart-McNeill (August 14, 1838).



## CHAPTER V

### AFTERMATH OF THE SIEGE OF HERAT

1837 - 1842

Muḥammad Shāh took his time in retreating after announcing to the British that he would end his siege in August of 1838. While agreeing to the British demand to pull back from Herat, the Iranians still tried to negotiate with the Afghans to salvage what they could in the embarrassing situation. The Sadūzays of Herat were now in a good position to reimpose upon the Iranians the insult and loss of pride that they had endured for almost ten months of siege. Yār Muḥammad Khān and Kāmṛān Shāh refused to negotiate. Instead, they demanded reparation for losses they had suffered.<sup>1</sup>

The Shah of Iran refused to agree to the demands of the leaders of Herat. He asked the British if it were possible for him to withdraw his army without any sort of settlement with them. The British representative, Lt. Col. Stoddart, tried to persuade the Iranians to come to terms. But Muḥammad Shāh decided not to risk further humiliation. In a letter to the British, the irate Shah bitterly attacked the British participation in the conflict. He

refused to admit his army had attacked an independent province. He maintained the position that Herat was a part of Iran, and that the leaders of Herat Province would have come to an amicable agreement if it had not been for British intervention.<sup>2</sup>

Muhammad Shāh was far from pleased with the British envoy McNeill, who had interfered with his expedition, encouraged Afghan resistance, and generally stood in the way of his goals. The Iranians even attempted to get Britain to pay for the cost of their siege of Herat:

...viewing the devotion of your Excellency to Persia, how can you give your consent, that the Persian Government should expend so much money and troubles unprofitably, that the army should return without compensation for losses for the captives and for the tribes, and that the friendship which subsists between both Governments should be the means of inflicting disgrace on Persia?<sup>3</sup>

But the British would not provide money for the retreat, and on September 9, 1838, Stoddart wrote McNeill: "The Shah has mounted his horse 'Ameerij,' and is gone."<sup>4</sup> Frustration with the British mounted. But even before his expedition, Muhammad Shāh had taken steps against the British minister. He had ordered his special envoy Husayn Khān to go to England to obtain McNeill's recall.<sup>5</sup> Because of ill health, Husayn Khān stayed in Iran, most of the time in Tabriz, and did not leave until the beginning of 1838. He carried a document asserting the primary interest of Iran

in attacking Herat was to stop the slave trade and rescue its victims, which was only part of the truth.<sup>6</sup> The Shah hoped his envoy would obtain McNeill's recall, and therefore he did not agree to any more concessions to the British representative. To retaliate, McNeill left Iran and went to Erzerum. Later he returned home and resigned, and Justin Sheil replaced him.<sup>7</sup> Nor did the Russian minister, Count Ivan Simonich, fare well as a result of the expedition. The Russians replaced him, giving the reason that he had disobeyed his orders by interfering in Herat.<sup>8</sup>

Husayn Khān first went to Vienna, where he met with Captain Arthur Conolly, who had traveled in Herat. Conolly unofficially discussed the problems of Iran with the Shah's envoy. Husayn Khān, as could be expected, blamed the trouble with England on McNeill. He stated with conviction that Afghanistan was part of Iran, based on the fact that it had been part of the old Safavid Empire. The Afghans, he claimed, had been only servants of Nādir Shāh, and had arrogated the titles of kings and princes, while in fact they were "...a race of rebellious savages who take advantage of every internal disorder in Persia to carry off our people and sell them like horses."<sup>9</sup>

The Iranian envoy finally reached London in June of 1839, and was "unofficially" received by the British Foreign Secretary. Husayn Khān was unable to convince him of

McNeill's duplicity or of the legitimacy of the Qājār court's claim to Afghanistan. Palmerston informed him that England would normalize relations with Iran only if all of McNeill's conditions were met.<sup>10</sup> Despite the firm stance of the British Secretary, Ḥusayn Khān did not change his negotiating posture. The two men met for over four hours trading accusations, each maintaining that he was the victim of the other's acts. Palmerston accused the Iranians of attacking Herat because the Russians had influenced them. Ḥusayn Khān argued that the Iranians acted because of their desire to pacify Khurāsān, not because of Russian pressure.<sup>11</sup> Ḥusayn Khān met again in July with Palmerston, but refused to give in to the British demands, which once again included a public apology by the grand vizir for stopping the messenger, and the signing of a commercial treaty.<sup>12</sup> The envoy subsequently carried back to Tehran a set of British demands, including the evacuation of the towns of Ghūrīyān and Farāh and all Afghan lands under Iranian control. He had to report his failure to the Shah. The Shah had him severely bastinadoed, and at least for a short time was furious at his envoy's failure.<sup>13</sup> A few months later, however, the Shah agreed to meet Palmerston's demands and promised to pull his forces out of Ghūrīyān.<sup>14</sup>

After the siege of 1838 the Qājār monarch somehow had to convince the people and religious leaders of Iran

that his campaign against the Afghans had been successful. The siege had been costly in terms of men and materials. But, having been outlasted by the Afghans, the Shah was unwilling to suffer the severe loss of prestige among his subjects, especially the Shī'ah 'ulamā, that would accompany withdrawal. Therefore Muḥammad Shāh issued an official firman to be read at the public mosque in Tehran. The firman, in part, stated that the Iranian army had reduced Herat to "four bare walls"; it charged that the British had illegally intervened and disregarded their treaties with Iran; and, according to it, the Iranian army had pulled back from Herat only because of the British.<sup>15</sup> Continuing, the firman read:

The winter season was now approaching, and if we protracted to a longer period our stay at Herat, there appeared a possibility that our victorious army might suffer from a scarcity of provisions, and that the maintenance of our troops might not be unaccompanied with difficulty; the tranquility of our provinces was also a matter of serious attention to our benevolent thoughts; and thus, in sole consideration of the interest of faith and country, and from a due regard to the welfare of our troops, we set in motion our world-subduing army upon the 19th of Jumadayel Alher, and prepared to return to our Capital.<sup>16</sup>

In Herat, the situation after the siege was desperate. Of the approximately 70,000 inhabitants before the siege, only 7,000 remained, and most of them were starving.<sup>17</sup> The majority of the Shī'ah population had been killed, sold into slavery, or reduced to poverty. Lt. Col.

Stoddart left the Iranian camp to join Eldred Pottinger in the city. Pottinger had been providing money for food to about seven or eight hundred of the survivors.<sup>18</sup> The slave trade, which still existed in the city, was about the only source of revenue left. When Pottinger and Stoddart tried to bring about an end to the trade, Yār Muhammad Khān looked upon their actions as interference in the internal affairs of the province. After enduring several insults, they felt obliged to leave. Stoddart left first and journeyed to Bukhārā. Pottinger stayed in the city for a while at the request of Kāmran Shāh.<sup>19</sup>

#### The Simla Manifesto;

#### British India Declares War on the Bārakzays

When Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, sent the small detachment of troops to Khārg in the Persian Gulf before the siege had ended, he also decided that it was to Britain's advantage to put the old Sadūzay Shah, Shujā' al-Mulk, back on the throne in Kābul. The British Government no longer considered Iran a buffer against Russia. Lord Auckland feared collusion among the Russians, Iranians, and the Bārakzays of Qandahār, and felt that an Afghanistan united under Shujā' al-Mulk would be more in tune with British interests, as well as a protective barrier against Russia.<sup>20</sup>

On the first day of October, 1838, Lord Auckland

issued the Simla Manifesto (Appendix IV). This document contained a hodgepodge of official arguments as to why it was necessary for Lord Auckland, as Governor-General of India, to attack Kābul and Qandahār and install the Sadūzay Afghan Shujā' al-Mulk back on the throne in Kābul. The statement gave the following reasons: one, the Iranians were attacking the Sadūzay Afghans in Herat; two, the Bārakzay Afghan rulers of Kābul and Qandahār were conspiring with the Iranians; three, the Bārakzay ruler of Kābul, Dūst Muḥammad Khān, refused to come to an amicable arrangement with the British ally, Maharajah Ranjit Singh; and four, there would be no peace in the subcontinent until an ally was in power in Kābul. The British Secretary specified:

...an ally who is interested in resisting aggression, and establishing tranquillity, in the place of chiefs ranking themselves in subservience to a hostile power, and seeking to promote schemes of conquest and aggrandisement.<sup>21</sup>

The intent of the British was twofold. First, they wanted to force Iran to give up the siege of Herat. Second, they wanted to set up a buffer zone between Russia, Iran, and the subcontinent of India, which they could control, not by long-term military occupation, but by military and fiscal assistance to a hand-picked ruler who would resist Iranian and Russian political, economic, and military encroachments in Central Asia.<sup>22</sup>

Their first goal, unknown to Lord Auckland, was accomplished three weeks before the Simla Manifesto was issued. The Iranians had withdrawn their army from Herat when finally told by an official British envoy that refusal would mean war. When Lord Auckland finally did learn of Iran's retreat, however, he did not change his plans.<sup>23</sup> He refused to recall his army although it had not yet left Indian territory. Lord Auckland based his actions on a set of conditions that no longer existed. His intransigence helped cause a disastrous campaign to Kābul which eventually cost the lives of over 13,000 men, women, and children.<sup>24</sup>

Accomplishing their second goal would prove to be much more difficult. The British not only had to place Shujā' al-Mulk back on the throne in Kābul, but they also had to convince the ruler of Herat Province, Kāmran Shāh, and his vizir, Yār Muḥammad Khān, to recognize officially or at least by acquiescence, Shujā' al-Mulk's government in Kābul, and to promise not to interfere in his affairs.<sup>25</sup> As part of the plan to accomplish the second task, the British were willing to recognize Kāmran Shāh in Herat and support his claim to the province. The Simla Manifesto, in fact, stated that during the invasion "the integrity of Herat, in the possession of its present ruler, will be fully respected."<sup>26</sup> With the second goal in mind, the British



troops proceeded to Qandahār.

The British force arrived in Qandahār in late April, 1839. The orders were to hold negotiations to neutralize any opposition from Herat to placing their "ally" Shujā' al-Mulk back on the throne. Therefore the British met with Najīb Allāh Khān, a representative sent from Herat. According to the British, Najīb Allāh Khān came to congratulate Shujā' al-Mulk on his success, but it is more likely that he came to assess his strength and that of the British. The envoy and the British reached an agreement which allayed the opposition from Herat. The British recognized Yār Muḥammad Khān as the official representative of Kāmran Shāh and also recognized his hereditary right to the vizirship in Herat.<sup>27</sup> Article Three of the agreement provided:

The vizier engages not to act in any matter contrary to the wishes and advice of the British Political Officer at Herat, and will be guided in all that concerns the welfare of the two States by the counsel of the above mentioned officer; and should the British Agent interfere in the affairs of Herat without the knowledge and consent of the vizier, he shall be considered as endeavouring to disturb the friendship between the two States.<sup>28</sup>

The agreement stipulated that the Afghans would listen to the advice of the British, but British interference in the affairs of Herat would be a violation of the terms to which they had agreed. It was not a well designed document and left plenty of room for disagreement. In the end, however,

Major D'Arcy Todd signed for the British on the part of the Governor-General of India, and Najīb Allāh Khān signed for Yār Muḥammad Khān.<sup>29</sup>

As a result of these negotiations, William MacNaghten, the political envoy accompanying the expedition, dispatched a mission to Herat under the leadership of Major Todd.<sup>30</sup> MacNaghten sent with him 120 soldiers and a large sum of money to convince Kāmṛān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān of his good intentions and to provide the means for the Afghans to repair Herat's defenses alluded to in another article of the memorandum.<sup>31</sup>

Kāmṛān Shāh's capital was in dire need of the money Major Todd was carrying. More than one-tenth of those left were being kept from starving by British funds.<sup>32</sup> The British officer was in an excellent bargaining position and immediately began negotiating a "Treaty of Friendship and Alliance" with the rulers of Herat, which the Afghans and British concluded on the 13th of August, 1839. The document contained eleven articles.<sup>33</sup> Articles Two and Four of the treaty were the most important to Kāmṛān Shāh and his vizir. Article Two promised noninterference in Herat's internal affairs. Article Four provided financial assistance to Kāmṛān Shāh:

The British Government undertakes to provide His Majesty Shah Kamran with loans of money, with officers, and will all other means that may be found necessary for the protection of

His Majesty's person and country, and to assist in the defense of His Majesty's rights and interests against all foreign encroachments to the utmost of its ability.<sup>34</sup>

In exchange for Kāmrān Shāh's guaranteed independence in Herat and British financial backing, the treaty provided recognition of the hereditary rule of Kāmrān Shāh's family; the end of the selling of slaves; recognition of Shujā' al-Mulk's independent kingdom; arrangements for increased trade; and a promise from Kāmrān Shāh to "...refrain from entering into any correspondence with foreign powers without the knowledge and consent of the British Representative at his court."<sup>35</sup> The Herat government also agreed to end all taxation until the harvest of 1840.

In order to obtain funds and perhaps to prevent an armed takeover of his kingdom, Kāmrān Shāh had agreed to allow Britain to have virtual veto power over his foreign affairs. Dūst Muḥammad Khān's unwillingness to do this, when the British envoy Captain Burnes was in Kābul the year before, was one of the most important reasons for the British invasion of Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> Kāmrān Shāh was undoubtedly aware of the potential ramifications of a negative reply. Yet the Afghans of Herat were not willing to accept the arrangements made with the British as permanent.

#### The British Install Shujā' al-Mulk in Kābul

Six days after William MacNaghten sent Major Todd

to Herat, the British army and Shujā' al-Mulk left Qandahār on their way to Kābul. By July 20th they reached the outskirts of the city of Ghaznī.<sup>37</sup> The British stormed Ghazni, and then proceeded to Kābul.

After the loss of Ghaznī, which the Afghans believed was impregnable, Dūst Muḥammad Khān attempted to compromise with the British, realizing his position was desperate. His forces were not capable of defeating his enemy. In pursuit of a settlement, he sent his brother, Navāb Jabbār Khān, to Ghaznī to offer an exchange--the position of ruler for that of vizir. Navāb Jabbār Khān offered to relinquish control of Kābul to the Sadūzay aspirant on behalf of his master in return for Dūst Muḥammad Khān's appointment as Shujā' al-Mulk's vizir.<sup>38</sup> This offer must have seemed eminently logical to the Amīr. What he offered was to reestablish the old Sadūzay-Bārakzay coalition which had existed before the death of his brother Faṭh Khān in 1818. MacNaghten would have nothing to do with such a proposal, feeling that the Bārakzays had irreparably harmed their position by dealing with the Iranians.<sup>39</sup> Nor would Shujā' al-Mulk have anything to do with Dūst Muḥammad Khān's suggestions, so MacNaghten turned down the deal. Their short-sightedness ended one of the few possible chances for a peaceful settlement.

On July 30th the army again set off towards Kābul.

On the first of August, the British learned that Dūst Muḥammad Khān's followers had deserted him, forcing him to flee towards Bāmiyān.<sup>40</sup> The British then installed Shujā' al-Mulk in power on August 7th, and spent the remainder of the summer and fall pacifying the surrounding area.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān spent the same time gathering troops for an assault. He was victorious in a minor skirmish at Parvān Darah on November 2, 1840. But then he decided that the disunity in the Durrānī kingdom was so great and his enemy so strong that he had no choice but to give up.<sup>41</sup> He surrendered to MacNaghten the next day, and on November 12 left Kābul for India under a pledge of safe conduct.<sup>42</sup>

#### Yār Muḥammad Khān Looks for Other Allies

Soon after the British mission arrived in Herat, Yār Muḥammad Khān sent a letter to the Governor of Khurāsān, Allāh Yār Khān, the Āṣif al-Dawlah, asking for troops and money to be used against the British.<sup>43</sup> Judging from the content of the letter, it appears that it was sent soon after the British arrived, and contained an appeal as well as a warning to the Iranians of what would happen if aid were not forthcoming.<sup>44</sup> It explained that Yār Muḥammad Khān had not allowed the soldiers who accompanied Major Todd into the city, even though Todd had requested entrance. Yār Muḥammad Khān's appeal went on: "If you

agree to this proposal quick, bring money and troops now that it is early, and we have the opportunity to put our hands to work..."<sup>45</sup> Then, warning the Iranians of the consequences of denying him aid, he said:

And if you will not come, do not again find fault with us, for we are faced by necessity and feeble; and that we ourselves have any wish to bring unbelievers (Kāfr hā) into the dominions of Islam.<sup>46</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān appealed to the Iranians as fellow Muslims in this first request for help, hoping to arouse their support for Herat. Later, when Major Todd found out about this correspondence with the Iranians, he felt it a breach of the treaty and reported it to Lord Auckland. The treaty was not legally binding on Herat at the time, however, as it was not ratified by Lord Auckland until eight months after it was signed in Herat.<sup>47</sup> Whether Kāmran Shāh or Yār Muḥammad Khān were aware of this technicality is not known. By the time the British found out about the correspondence with the Iranians they had already given Yār Muḥammad Khān about 60,000. They were exceedingly displeased with his actions.<sup>48</sup> Since communications with the Governor-General took a long time, no immediate action was possible.

In January of 1840, Yār Muḥammad Khān again wrote to the Governor of Khurāsān soliciting assistance from Iran "to throw off the thralldom of the English" and he offered to send one of his sons to Mashhad as a hostage if

such aid were forthcoming.<sup>49</sup> In the spring, Kāmārān Shāh sent Zabar Dast Khān as an envoy to Tehran with another letter to "that brother whom I obey" (the Shah of Iran), asking for an alliance against the British:

That which now seems absolutely and positively necessary for the preservation of our religion, and the customs of Islam... and incumbent on our zeal and for the preservation of our reputation, is that, with God's blessing, we should unite ourselves to the King of Islam (the Shah of Iran).<sup>50</sup>

The Qājār Shah, after failing to force Kāmārān Shāh to recognize Iran's sovereignty after a yearlong siege of his capital, did not immediately respond. There were significant details in the correspondence. Kāmārān Shāh addressed the Shah of Iran as his "brother", which was the style of greeting between sovereigns. His request to "unite" with the Shah rather than asking to be his subject also implied equality. Kāmārān Shāh's reference to the Shah of Iran as the "King of Islam" must have aroused suspicion in the Shah. The sectarian rivalry and animosity between Shī'ah Iranians and Sunnī Afghans was ever present. The implication that it somehow could have evaporated overnight must have seemed unbelievable to the Iranians.

The Iranians countered with their own political initiative. The Governor of Khurāsān, the Aṣif al-Dawlah, addressed a letter to Yār Muḥammad Khān demanding that "Prince" Kāmārān and his vizir Yār Muḥammad Khān write the

Shah of Iran declaring that Herat Province was part of Iran.<sup>51</sup> In a note sent to Allāh Yār Khān, the Shah had agreed with this approach, promising to send aid to Herat if Kāmārān Shāh delivered such letters:

If Prince Kamran will give a writing formally sealed so as to be received by foreign States to the effect that Herat belongs to Persia, acknowledging it to have been a dependency of my Government and promising to pay revenue and to offer Peshkesh (tribute) I will render all necessary aid and assistance to Prince Kamran and Yar Muhammad and will not object to any thing that may be required.<sup>52</sup>

The letters from the Afghans of Herat and from the Iranians are excellent studies in tactics of political evasion. Kāmārān Shāh, by calling the Shah "brother" was professing his equality; the Governor of Khurāsān, by addressing Kāmārān Shāh as "Prince" was indicating that he did not recognize Kāmārān Shāh's claim. The issue of sovereignty that had divided the Afghans from the Iranians since the early eighteenth century was still very much alive.

#### The Conflict over Ghūrīyān

Another issue which complicated matters between the Iranians and the Afghans of Herat was the Iranian occupation in Afghan territory of the fort of Ghūrīyān. Since the beginning of the siege of Herat in 1837, the fort had remained in Iranian hands. The peace agreement between Iran and Britain contained a promise by the Iranians to



return Ghūrīyān to the Afghans.<sup>53</sup> When the Iranians withdrew from Herat, however, they balked at fulfilling this commitment. In November of 1840, Lord Palmerston wrote to the Iranian Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, insisting on the evacuation of Ghūrīyān. He made it clear that the good relations between Great Britain and Iran depended on the return of the fortress to the Afghans.<sup>54</sup>

John McNeill, the official British minister to Iran, had recently returned from England and was in Trabzon, in the Ottoman Empire. The situation in Herat had prevented him from proceeding to Iran. He sent Dr. James Riach, a member of the legation in Tehran, to offer an exchange--the fort of Ghūrīyān for the island of Khārg in the Persian Gulf, which the British had occupied at the height of the siege. The Shah and his court accepted, and addressed separate letters to the Āṣif al-Dawlah in Mashhad, ordering him to return Ghūrīyān to Afghan control. Dr. Riach personally carried the letters to the Governor and tried to convince him to act.<sup>55</sup>

Major Todd in Herat was not aware of what had transpired in Tehran. So he had pressured Yār Muḥammad Khān to take the fort forcibly from the Iranians.<sup>56</sup> But while Yār Muḥammad Khān was soliciting aid from Iran against the British, he found one excuse after another not to act. At one point, to pacify Major Todd, he went so far

as to accept  $\text{£}20,000$  to prepare military operations for an attack, and then at the last minute refused to follow through.<sup>57</sup> Major Todd retaliated by reducing the monthly payment to Kāmran Shāh to  $\text{£}2,500$  per month.<sup>58</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān was buying time. He did not want to offend either the Iranians or the British to the extent that either would break off contact. He maintained equilibrium by alternately using one side against the other.

Justin Sheil, the acting British representative to Iran, in a letter to Lord Palmerston, discussed Yār Muḥammad Khān's motives. He could see that the vizir was trying to keep Herat independent by playing the British off against the Iranians. Sheil wrote:

Herat...had neither the intention nor the desire to throw itself wholly on Persia, or to propose in sincerity even a nominal vassalage to that country. The course it is likely to adopt, if it has the power, is to intrigue alternately with all parties, preserving for itself as much independence as circumstance will admit of.<sup>59</sup>

During the negotiations with Iran over aid, an envoy from the Shāh, Mīrzā Mas'ūd, was sent from Tehran to reach an agreement with Yār Muḥammad Khān.<sup>60</sup> When the British reduced their payments, Yār Muḥammad Khān asked the envoy to meet him at Ghūrīyān and told Major Todd of his plans, hinting at more aid. The attempt failed. Apparently, the vizir was reluctant. He told the envoy that he was not coming, and that Herat should arrange its own affairs

with the British.<sup>61</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān resented the substantial British financial support. The British spent money repairing irrigation canals, feeding the paupers, and fortifying Herat, but by their fīscal leverage they were beginning to control the city.<sup>62</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān was not sure what benefits an alliance with Iran would bring Herat, however, and for the time being, jousting with Major Todd seemed to be the safer alternative. By the end of 1840, the British had spent more than ₹200,000 in Herat.<sup>63</sup> Though neither Kāmṛān Shāh nor Yār Muḥammad Khān wanted them to dominate the city, and relations between the Afghans of Herat and the British had soured, Yār Muḥammad Khān still vacillated. In September of 1840 the vizīr wrote to the Shah of Iran to send an envoy to discuss relations. He then told the British what he had done, hoping to be persuaded by additional funds to rescind the request.<sup>64</sup>

In January of 1841, after receiving encouraging news from the Afghans in rebellion against the British in the occupied portions of Afghanistan, Yār Muḥammad Khān reopened communications with the Iranians in Mashhad, in violation of the treaty.<sup>65</sup> Major Todd reacted by demanding that a "brigade" of British troops be allowed to enter Herat Province and occupy the citadel.<sup>66</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān had earlier suggested such a possibility, but now, when

Todd put the idea to him as a demand, he refused. Major Todd responded by unilaterally ending the subsidy.

Nothing in the treaty obligated Kāmṛān Shāh or Yār Muḥammad Khān to yield to British demands. In fact, the British had promised in Article Four of the Treaty of Friendship not to meddle in Herat's internal affairs.<sup>67</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān viewed Major Todd's action as an unfriendly act and a British ploy to usurp control of Herat. The vizir then demanded an additional ~~2~~20,000 and an increase in the monthly subsidy to permit the entry of British soldiers into Herat.<sup>68</sup> Negotiations stalled, and the troops were not allowed to enter the citadel.<sup>69</sup> The Afghans gave the British an ultimatum of either paying or leaving.<sup>70</sup> Major Todd countered by demanding that Yār Muḥammad Khān's son, Sayyid Muḥammad, go to Girishk and accompany British troops back to Herat. According to Yār Muḥammad Khān, Major Todd wanted the son to go to India.<sup>71</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān refused.

The Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland, earlier had disapproved of British troops being stationed in Herat, and so Major Todd was acting contrary to the orders of his superior.<sup>72</sup> As a result, on February 8, 1841, Yār Muḥammad Khān told Major Todd to pay the subsidy or leave Herat.<sup>73</sup> Todd and his fellow British officers decided they had endured enough and prepared to leave. It is doubtful

that Kāmrān Shāh or Yār Muḥammad Khān really thought the British would leave, since Britain had occupied the rest of Afghanistan. When Major Todd announced the decision to depart, neither Kāmrān Shāh nor Yār Muḥammad Khān gave him any incentive for staying.<sup>74</sup>

On February 14, 1841, the British left Herat for Qandahār, leaving Kāmrān Shāh and his vizir in a precarious situation.<sup>75</sup> They had forced the British out of Herat after receiving over ₹200,000 in subsidies and without having fired a shot. They had intentionally put off any agreement with the Iranians, in hopes of getting more aid from the British. Now it was imperative to find an ally in Iran to fend off a possible renewal of British hostility towards them.

#### Submission to the Shah

By demanding the stationing of troops in the citadel, and sending a member of Yār Muḥammad Khān's family to a British-occupied area as a hostage against the terms of the Treaty of Friendship and Lord Auckland's orders, Major Todd had convinced the rulers of Herat to seek security elsewhere. Todd's unreasonable requests led both Kāmrān Shāh and his vizir to reconsider acquiescing to the demands of the Iranians and offering their written nominal allegiance to their old regional antagonist, something they had never formerly been willing to do.

The risks involved were immense. One of the major obstacles was religion. The Sunnī Muslim Afghans considered the Shī'ah Iranians heretics. The Sunnī 'ulamā and Afghan tribal members in general would be against any compromise that included approval of Shī'ism. It had been just three years since Kāmṛān Shāh had sought help from the other Sunnī Afghans against the Shī'ah Iranians. When Kāmṛān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān finally decided to offer their submission to the Shah of Iran, there was no mention of religion. Submission was an act of political expediency, a stopgap measure to preserve Herat Province as a semi-independent entity.

During the following month, Kāmṛān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān each addressed letters to the Shah of Iran acknowledging his sovereignty over Herat Province and all of Afghanistan.<sup>76</sup> Kāmṛān Shāh's letter gave his reasons for turning to the Shah. He had refused to cooperate with Major Todd because Todd wanted to place five regiments and ten guns in the citadel of Herat, and he wanted to send one of the chiefs of Herat to India as a hostage.<sup>77</sup> He declared his submission as follows:

It is clear and evident to all men that Herat is in Khorassan and is part of the Kingdom of Persia and that the late king (Futteh Ali Shah, who is now in heaven, sweet smelling be the dust of his grave), entrusted this country to me, his humble and faithful friend; and now with my own pen of truth, I bear witness and assert that

Herat belongs to Persia, and that the supreme power over it is in the hands of the ministers of the reigning king, whose dominion and reign may God for ever preserve and in what ever way your majesty shall please to direct as the possession and disposal of it, I submit and obey.<sup>78</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān's communication was in a similar vein. He ignored the hostilities of the past, as well as the matter of religion, in declaring his loyalty and devotion to a regional antagonist which every ruler of Herat had opposed since the Qājārs first tried to expand in Khurāsān in the late eighteenth century.<sup>79</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān even made a plea for troops, stating that the Afghans of Herat were determined to cut off and turn out the British.<sup>80</sup>

Even after Major Todd left, there is no question that Kāmṛān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān wanted the British out of all the old Durrānī kingdom. Kāmṛān Shāh was the direct descendant of Aḥmad Shāh and thus held claim to the whole area, and Shāh Shujā' al-Mulk, though a Sadūzay, was still a rival.

The Afghans of Herat were busy fomenting resistance in areas occupied by the British.<sup>81</sup> They knew that their failure to expel the British would mean their doom. Their actions indicate they never intended to surrender Herat to Iran. Nonetheless, they gave the Qājārs something they did not have before--written recognition of their sovereignty over Afghanistan. Though the letters of submis-

sion were written out of expediency, they provided the monarch of Iran with signed documents with which to confront the British. At the same time, they provided the Afghans with an ally against a possible British attack on Herat.

Soon after Todd's departure from Herat, the Governor of Khurāsān finally carried out the orders of the Shah and turned Ghūrīyān over to the Afghans. He allowed Dr. Riach, the British representative, to travel to Ghūrīyān to make arrangements for the transfer. On March 31, 1841, the Iranian troops evacuated the town and it was turned over to a representative of Yār Muḥammad Khān.<sup>82</sup>

If the British Government in London had its way, Herat's independence from their control would be short-lived. On June 4, the British Cabinet sent Lord Auckland strict orders to annex Herat to Shujā' al-Mulk's kingdom by force by June of 1842.<sup>83</sup> Palmerston's view was that they should "strike" Herat while "the iron is hot. If we let it grow cold it will be too hard for our plows."<sup>84</sup> The London Cabinet suffered from over confidence in their army in Kābul. What it wanted to do and was able to do would soon be tested on the road from Kābul to Jalal'ābād.

### The Uprising in Kābul

Throughout 1841 there were uprisings against the British in much of eastern Afghanistan, but each time the British defeated the Durrānī insurgents.<sup>85</sup> It seemed by



the end of August, with the additional defeats of the Ghalzays, that Afghan resistance had been broken. MacNaghten then reduced the subsidy Britain had been paying to Afghan tribes between Kābul and Jalal'ābād. He was so assured of his position that he cut their subsidy in half.<sup>86</sup> In response, the Afghans closed the road between Kābul, Jalal'ābād, and Pishāvar. On November 2nd, an insurrection broke out in Kābul in which Alexander Burnes was murdered. From that day until they fled Kābul, the British were under constant attack.

On the 22nd of November, Muḥammad Akbar Khān, Dūst Muḥammad Khān's son, arrived from Bāmiyān. Two days later he demanded the British surrender unconditionally. They refused. On December 11th, MacNaghten and one of his companions were murdered while meeting with Muḥammad Akbar Khān and his cousin Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān.<sup>87</sup> Eventually, on January 6, 1842, approximately 4,500 soldiers and more than 12,000 camp followers started an agreed upon retreat from Kābul through the gorge to Jalal'ābād. Only a handful of Europeans and 2,000 sepoys survived.<sup>88</sup> Afghan marksmen and the severe cold killed most of the group. In February, the Ghalzay Afghans retook the fort of Ghaznī. The Afghans presented Queen Victoria with the first military disaster of her reign. The military catastrophe between Kābul and Jalal'ābād was a major shock to the British. It also

encouraged Yār Muḥammad Khān in Herat to do away with Kāmṛān Shāh.

#### Yār Muḥammad Khān Takes Over

After the British left Herat, and before the insurrection in Kābul, Kāmṛān Shāh and his vizir engaged in a power struggle. The Sadūzay shut himself in the citadel in Herat and asked for British help. Yār Muḥammad Khān turned to the Shah's court for support. Eventually the vizir gained enough backing to force Kāmṛān Shāh out of the citadel to the village of Kūhsan, near Herat.<sup>89</sup> There, in early 1842, on orders from the vizir, two members of the vizir's tribe, Taj 'Alīkūzay and Dādū 'Alīkūzay, strangled Kāmṛān Shāh.<sup>90</sup> Thus Herat passed out of Sadūzay hands for only the second time since the beginning of the Durrānī kingdom in 1747 (Figure 5). Yār Muḥammad Khān 'Alīkūzay took power and the Province of Herat became his. The destruction of the British army in the gorge between Kābul and Jalal'ābād in January must have weighed heavily in Yār Muḥammad Khān's decision to assassinate Kāmṛān Shāh. It appears that the final decision to eliminate him was made only after news of the British defeat at Kābul reached Herat, Major Todd had left; the British army had been forced to retreat; and only his Sadūzay rival stood in the way of his complete takeover.<sup>91</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān recognized Iranian sovereignty over Herat in writing even though the British threat had been removed. After taking power in late fall, 1841, he wrote to the Governor of Khurāsān, the Āṣif al-Dawlah, for help. Allāh Yār Khān wanted to make sure that Yār Muḥammad Khān would not renege on his acceptance of Iranian suzerainty, so he sent a die for striking coins to provide further physical evidence of submission. The Governor of Khurāsān wrote in his letter:

Be perfectly tranquil on every point, for I will do whatever I know and whatever I can. A die has been forwarded that you may strike the coinage of Herat in the name of the Shah of Persia and the trumpets should be sounded in the name of the Shah of Persia. What ever you require in men and money shall be sent without fail, and I will act accordingly to the orders I receive from Tehran.<sup>92</sup>

There is no proof that Yār Muḥammad Khān ever minted coins in the Shah of Iran's name, a refusal probably necessitated by the religious issue, and indicative of an allegiance that was only political and tenuous in nature. Nine months later, however, in late 1842, he continued to profess his loyalty to the Shah in writing, paying lip service to his political connection with Iran. There is no evidence during this period that the Iranians tried to replace him with one of their own, or made any attempt to interfere with Herat's internal affairs, or had any intention of collecting taxes in Herat.

The monarchy of Iran had succeeded, with the unwitting help of the British, in obtaining recognition of its sovereignty from a direct descendant of Aḥmad Shāh. Yār Muḥammad Khān had managed to remove the British from Herat Province, and because of the destruction of the British army in the Kābul gorge was now safe from further British attempts to take over. He was also aware that the Shah was powerless to unseat him and would settle for written recognition of his dominion.

The British lost on all fronts. Their policies in Herat had backfired. Their attempt to place a leader amicable to their orders on the Kābul throne had ended in disaster. Yār Muḥammad Khān ruled Herat for all practical purposes as an independent state. The monarch of Iran was content with recognition of his sovereignty. And the British forces were once again back in India. Major Todd was disciplined for his unauthorized actions. The so-called "pawns" in the game for control of Central Asia were still active competitors, looking after their own interests. And under the circumstances, they seemed to have out-maneuvered their British rivals. Even Dūst Muḥammad Khān, who had seemed to lose everything, returned to Kābul with the acquiescence of the British, who had temporarily given up their desire to rule Kābul through an Afghan surrogate.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/107, Royal Camp, Stoddart-McNeill (August 19, 1838) (hereafter cited as Great Britain with reel number).

<sup>2</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/108 Tehran, Mīrzā 'Alī-McNeill (August 25, 1838); and Rouhallah K. Ramazani, The Foreign Policy of Iran 1500-1941 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1966), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Royal Camp, Stoddart-McNeill (September 9, 1838).

<sup>5</sup>Husayn Khān, the Niẓām al-Dawlah, later became the Governor-General of Fars.

<sup>6</sup>Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1951), II:336 (hereafter cited as Sykes, Persia).

<sup>7</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/10, memorandum of the substance of a conference between Lord Palmerston and Husayn Khan (July 13, 1839).

<sup>8</sup>J. B. Kelly, Britain and the Persian Gulf 1795-1880 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 344 (hereafter cited as Kelly, Britain).

<sup>9</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/12 Vienna, "Conversation with Capt. Conolly," received in London (August 20, 1839).

<sup>10</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/10, memorandum of the substance of a conference between Lord Palmerston and Husayn Khān (June 19, 1839), pp. 199-241.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., (July 13, 1839).

<sup>13</sup>Sykes, Persia, II:336.

<sup>14</sup>Actually, the troops did not leave until the British lodged several additional complaints against the occupation, and almost three years had elapsed since the time of the siege. The Iranians handed Ghūrīyān over to Kāmṛān Shāh in March of 1841.

<sup>15</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/109 Tehran, McNeill-Palmerston (November 28, 1838).

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Sir John Login, "Memorandum on the Political Relations of the English Mission with Herat 1837 to 1841," Appendix in J. P. Ferrier, Caravan Journeys and Wanderings in Persia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and Beloochistan (London; John Murray, 1857), p. 525 (hereafter cited as Login, "Memorandum").

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Sykes, Persia, II:334.

<sup>21</sup>Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1940), II: Appendix A, pp. 339-343 (hereafter cited as Sykes, Afghanistan).

<sup>22</sup>J. A. Norris, The First Afghan War 1838-1842 (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 231-246 (hereafter cited as Norris, War).

<sup>23</sup>Sir Henry Rawlinson, England and Russia in the East (London: John Murray, 1875), p. 58.

<sup>24</sup>W. K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, 3rd ed., rev. by M. C. Gillett (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 117.

<sup>25</sup>Norris, War, p. 273.

<sup>26</sup>Sykes, Afghanistan, II: Appendix A, p. 342.

<sup>27</sup>India, Foreign and Political Department, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds, Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, compiled by Charles U. Aitchison (Calcutta: Foreign Office Press, 1876), VI:346 (hereafter cited as India, Treaties).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 347.

<sup>30</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 525.

<sup>31</sup>India, Treaties, VI:346.

<sup>32</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 525.

<sup>33</sup>India, Treaties, VI:347-389.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., VI:348.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Foreign Office, XXV, 1859 (March 6, 1839), II:177.

<sup>37</sup>Norris, War, p. 276.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/112 Erzurum, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (September 25, 1839).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>India, Treaties, VI:349.

<sup>48</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 527.

<sup>49</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/114 Erzurum, Sheil-Palmerston (February 6, 1840).

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/115 Erzurum, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (July 2, 1840), Āṣif al-Dawlah-Yār Muḥammad Khān, received in Herat (May 9, 1840).

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., Isfahan, enclosure in Shah of Iran-Asif al-Dawlah (n.d.; trans. May 12, 1838).

<sup>53</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 529.

<sup>54</sup>Kelly, Britain, p. 340.

<sup>55</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/118 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (April 5, 1841), Mashhad, Riach-Mīrzā Abd'al Hasan Khān (March 7, 1841).

<sup>56</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 529.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/116 Erzurum, Sheil-Palmerston (August 24, 1840).

<sup>60</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/114 Erzurum, Sheil-Palmerston (February 6, 1840).



<sup>61</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 529.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid. Login reports 190,000 was spent by July, 1840; adding the monthly subsidy, the figure was well over 200,000 by January, 1841.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>India, Treaties, VI:347.

<sup>66</sup>Login, "Memorandum," pp. 529-530.

<sup>67</sup>India, Treaties, VI:347.

<sup>68</sup>Login, "Memorandum," pp. 529-530.

<sup>69</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/119 Trabzon, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (May 17, 1841), Yār Muḥammad Khān-Shah of Iran (n.d.).

<sup>70</sup>Login, "Memorandum," pp. 531-532.

<sup>71</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/119 Trabzon, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (May 17, 1841), Yār Muḥammad Khān-Shah of Iran (n.d.).

<sup>72</sup>Auckland Papers, 37704, fols. 63-5. Maddock to MacNaghten (March 15, 1841), cited in J. A. Norris, War, pp. 344-345.

<sup>73</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 532.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 531-532.

<sup>75</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/118 Trabzon, Sheil-Palmerston (April 5, 1841).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (May 17, 1841), Kāmṛān Shāh-Shah of Iran and Yār Muḥammad Khān-Shah of Iran (thought to have been written in early 1841).

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Shannon Caroline Stack, "Herat: A Political and Social Study," Ph.D. dissertation (The University of California at Los Angeles, 1975), pp. 365-444.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Login, "Memorandum," p. 530.

<sup>82</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/118 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (April 5, 1841), Mashhad, Riach-Mīrzā Abd'al Ḥasan Khān (March 7, 1841).

<sup>83</sup>Malcolm E. Yapp, Strategies of British India, Britain, Iran, and Afghanistan, 1798-1850 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 375, cites secret consultations of Governor-General in Council 746 (9 June 1841) Board Drafts of Secret Letters to India (I.O.R.).

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., cites F.O. 60/82, Palmerston-Hobhous (February 2, 1841).

<sup>85</sup>Norris, War, pp. 361-362.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 377.

<sup>88</sup>Louis Dupree, Afghanistan (Princeton: University Press, 1973), p. 389.

<sup>89</sup>Sultān Maḥmūd Durrānī, Tārīkh-i Sultānī (Bombay, privately printed, 1880's), p. 285.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/121 Tehran, enclosure in McNeill-Aberdeen (January 25, 1842), Yār Muḥammad Khān-Asif al-Dawlah.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., enclosure, Āsif al-Dawlah-Yār Muḥammad  
Khān (n.d.),

## CHAPTER VI

### YĀR MUHAMMAD KHĀN'S RULE IN HERAT, THE VIZĪR-I KABĪR, 1843-1851

#### Yār Muḥammad Khān Seeks Alternate Support

By January of 1843, Yār Muḥammad Khān was in absolute control of Herat Province--in all but writing. The Iranians were preoccupied with new problems with the Ottomans on their western border and had no time or will to interfere in Herat. The Shah still had not sent the military assistance he had promised the year before in return for Herat's submission. This lack of Iranian support had so upset Yār Muḥammad Khān that he held a meeting with Mīrzā Muṣā' Khān, the guardian of the shrine of Imām Riḏā at Mashhad, either in late December, 1842 or early January, 1843, complaining of the lack of "advantages" he had derived from his relationship with Iran.<sup>1</sup> At the time, Yār Muḥammad Khān needed funds to equip an army. The Khan of Marv had raided his territory and carried off the Jāmshīdī tribe which had been under his control. At the meeting at Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām, Yār Muḥammad Khān received a promise for 30,000 tomans from Mīrzā Muṣā' Khān for an expedition against Marv to recover the tribe.<sup>2</sup> But even with

this promise the Shah would not or could not provide additional aid to Herat.

This continued lack of direct fiscal support from Iran is partly explained by the events of January, 1843, at the holy city of Karbalā in Ottoman-controlled Iraq. The Ottoman Governor of Sulāymānīyah attacked this holy city, putting to death many of its Shī'ah inhabitants, defiling sepulchers and mosques, and severely wounding one of the women of the Iranian royal family who was in Karbalā on a religious pilgrimage.<sup>3</sup>

Though Karbalā was in Ottoman territory, the Shī'ah 'ulamā of Iran had always regarded the protection of the holy site as the Shah's obligation. When news of the attack reached Tehran, members of the 'ulamā pressured the Shah and his Ṣadr-i A'zam, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. The Ṣadr-i A'zam did not want to wage a drawn out, bloody, and economically devastating war. After the costly siege of Herat, Iran could ill afford such a venture. Through a policy of militant rhetoric and inaction, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī pacified the 'ulamā and averted the unwanted war.<sup>4</sup> Negotiations with the Ottomans over the Karbalā incident went on for several months, preventing any special attention being given to the affairs of Herat.

Yār Muḥammad Khān did not intend to wait for Iran

to offer assistance, and began manipulating affairs to his own benefit. After he finally received a promise for aid from the Shah's representative in Mashhad, he sent an envoy, Fayz Muḥammad Khān, with a letter to the Shah. The letter explained that he had received a diplomatic envoy from Bukhārā and accepted a "dress of honor" from the Amīr of Bukhārā, who had promised to give him the districts of Maymanah, Andkhuy, and Sar-i Pul. In return, the Amīr wanted to establish friendly relations with Herat. Yār Muḥammad Khān sent several horses with his letter to the Shah as signs of tribute.<sup>5</sup> But his main aim was to flaunt his ability to act independently.

The reaction was immediate. The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam replied to Yār Muḥammad Khān, cautioning him about dealing with the Amīr of Bukhārā and reminding him that he was no longer independent and should not accept diplomatic missions from foreign powers:

It was inconsistent with the wisdom of your Excellency to be beguiled by this sort of throwing chaff to birds; and making a gift of the stag before he was caught...you ought to have answered him that you were not under your own contract, and that he (the Amir) ought to address himself to the ministers of Persia, after doing this, horses and dresses of honor would have been suitable.<sup>6</sup>

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam warned Yār Muḥammad Khān that the Amir was trying to deceive him, that he only wanted his assistance to act against Iran.<sup>7</sup> The Iranian feared that the

Amīr of Bukhārā would push south of the Āmū Daryā (Oxus) into territory claimed by Iran, creating further problems for the monarchy. To make his point as to what belonged to Iran and what did not, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam defined the area for Yār Muḥammad Khān's benefit:

It is known to everyone that the territory on this side of the Oxus has no connection with the ruler of Toorkistan and whoever entertains any designs with regard to it, his object is strife and war. Between the Oxus and the Euphrates is Persia and whoever (sic--whatever) is on the other side of the river (Oxus) is Toorkistan.<sup>8</sup>

Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī's description of the northeastern extent of Iran corresponded closely with the boundaries recognized during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās the Great, identical to the legendary boundaries between the Iranian and Turanian peoples as described in Firdawsi's Shāhnamah. The Iranians still claimed all the territory held by the Safavids, and now that Herat had at least nominally submitted to them, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam did not hesitate to remind Yār Muḥammad Khān of their claim to all of Central Asia up to the Āmū Daryā. The actions of the Amir of Bukhārā and Yār Muḥammad Khān had succeeded once again in focusing the Shah's attention on Herat.

In response to Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī's strong letter, Yār Muḥammad Khān replied that when the Amīr of Bukhārā had asked him to take part in a campaign against Marv, he had refused to do so "out of loyalty to the Shah."<sup>9</sup> Yār

Muhammad Khān elaborated:

I answered that I had enlisted myself as a servant under the banners of the Shah in Shah of Persia, to whom I was faithfully devoted, and that without orders from the ministers of Persia I could not move in any direction.<sup>10</sup>

But while Yār Muhammad Khān pledged allegiance to the Shah, declining to help his enemy the Amīr of Bukhārā, he still maintained as much distance from his "recognized" sovereign as possible.

Yār Muhammad Khān, who took the title Vizīr-i Kabīr, would not comply with the standard practice for all Iranian provinces. He continued to refused to coin money in the name of the Qājār Shāh when he took power from Kāmran Shāh.<sup>11</sup> Even after the Governor of Khurāsān sent him a die he did not produce the required symbols of submission. Nor is there proof that he ever had the Friday prayer at the mosque in Herat recited in the name of the Shah. These actions were considered mandatory signs of acknowledgement of Iran's sovereignty. Failure to comply was politically dangerous for Yār Muhammad Khān, but this was probably dictated by the Sunnī 'ulamā, who would hardly want to mention the Shī'ah Qājār Shah in the Friday prayer, or have coins minted in his name.<sup>12</sup>

Unsure of the "Vizīr-i Kabīr's" loyalty, the Shah began to prepare for military action to prevent the Amīr of Bukhārā from moving south. In early June, 1843, an



Iranian official, Mīrzā Hasan Khān, wrote the British Government to explain to them the Iranian position regarding the Amīr's southward movements, and to solicit their feelings on the Shah's desire to prevent him from crossing the Āmū Daryā:

I announce for the information of the Minister of the English Government that if the khan proposes to take possession of those territories, it is absolutely incumbent on the ministers of the Government to expel him from that country...the Khan of Bokhara has no just claims that he should march from Turkistan and possess himself of Persian territory.<sup>13</sup> What absurd ideas, what impossible speculation.

The Iranians were realists. They had approached the British to find out their reaction to military action against Bukhārā. They were not involved in a conflict with any other foreign powers. They had avoided going to war over the massacre at Karbalā. And having obtained the written submission of Herat, they did not want to lose the new influence they had gained there.

It was now Yār Muḥammad Khān's turn to worry. Any movement against the Amīr of Bukhārā would mean another Iranian army outside of Herat, a situation he did not want repeated. The refusal to mint coins and recite the Friday prayer in the Qājār Shāh's name, and the receipt of robes of honor from Bukhārā, were three examples of how Yār Muḥammad Khān attempted to maintain a degree of political independence from Iran. His participation in a series of

marriage alliances with the Barakzay Afghans was another.

In February of 1844 an envoy from Dūst Muḥammad Khān arrived at Herat proposing two marital alliances: one between a daughter of Yār Muḥammad Khān and Muḥammad Akbar Khān, the son of Dūst Muḥammad Khān; the other between one of Dūst Muḥammad Khān's daughters and one of Yār Muḥammad Khān's sons. Yār Muḥammad Khān agreed to the arrangements. At about the same time, he also agreed to the marriage of his youngest daughter to the son of the Bārakzay ruler of Qandahār, Kuhandil Khān.<sup>14</sup> Thus he cemented his family more closely to the Bārakzay ruler of Kābul and kept most of his family ties among the Sunnī Afghans.

At this same time, Yār Muḥammad Khān's envoy in Tehran, Fayz Muḥammad Khān, and another envoy, Najīb Khān, the Tupchahbāshī of Herat, made overtures to the British, hoping to re-establish friendly relations with them. The new British minister, Justin Sheil, was hesitant. He did not want to give the envoy from Herat the impression that Britain was anxious to form a new alliance with Herat.<sup>15</sup> After the defeat of the British forces in Afghanistan, British opposition to Iranian involvement in Herat had declined. While Lord Palmerston was still at the Foreign Office, his representative in Tehran, out of a feeling of "inutility" did not react when the Shah's court informed

him that Herat had submitted to Iran.<sup>16</sup> Later, when Lord Aberdeen replaced Lord Palmerston, British opposition to Iranian involvement in Afghanistan continued to decrease.<sup>17</sup> In fact, in a dispatch dated March 2, 1844, Lord Aberdeen replied to an inquiry by the Iranians that the affairs of Afghanistan were of little concern to him.<sup>18</sup> This lack of interest encouraged the Iranians to step up their involvement in Herat Province.

While the British gave Yār Muḥammad Khān the cold shoulder, Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul tried to convince him to join in an alliance against the Amīr of Bukhārā.<sup>19</sup> Dūst Muḥammad Khān wanted to send his son, Muḥammad Akbar Khān, with an army of 10,000 to join up with Yār Muḥammad Khān's forces.<sup>20</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān did not trust the Amīr of Kābul, who apparently did not want him to gamble with his trump card with the Iranians. He was particularly upset with Dūst Muḥammad Khān's plea for help against the Amīr of Bukhārā:

Please God, there is reason to hope that we may reverse all the evil done to us by the Amir of Bukhara, a proceeding which would respond to the glory of the Afghan nation.<sup>21</sup>

This plea implied the unity of all Afghans.

While Yār Muḥammad Khān wanted a marriage alliance, he did not want 10,000 soldiers loyal to the Bārakzay ruler sitting on his doorstep. To remedy this he made arrange-

ments for his daughter to travel to Kābul for the marriage, eliminating the need to send an army of 10,000 with the bridegroom.<sup>22</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān was caught among four competing forces: one, the Shī'ah Qājār Shah wanted him to refrain from having any connection with the Amīr of Bukhārā; two, the Sunnī Amīr of Bukhārā wanted an alliance which by its nature would threaten Iran's control of Khurāsān; three, the Bārakzay Dūst Muḥammad Khān, the father of his future son-in-law, wanted to unite with him against the Amīr of Bukhārā; and four, the British wanted to maintain the status quo. Though complicating his course of action, the competitors provided Yār Muḥammad Khān with rival suitors which he could play against one another to preserve as much of his independence as possible.

Worried that one of his suitors might decide to turn against him, Yār Muḥammad Khān started to repair the fortifications of Herat.<sup>23</sup> Because of their proximity and relative strength, the Iranians were his immediate concern. Any action near Herat's territory was a potential threat to Yār Muḥammad Khān's independence. Such an event occurred soon afterward. The Governor of Khurāsān, the Āṣif al-Dawlah, gathered an army in early summer, 1844, and attacked the town of Qā'in, which had revolted.<sup>24</sup>

Because Qā'in was close to his border, Yār Muḥammad

Khān worried about the campaign extending into his territory. At the same time, Yār Muḥammad Khān wanted to let the Iranians know that he could and would respond. Thus when the Khān of Qā'īn fled from the onslaught of the Iranian army, Yār Muḥammad Khān gave him refuge.

Whether or not the Iranians were planning to extend their campaign to Herat Province is not known. Justin Sheil, the British minister in Tehran, thought they might and felt the Iranian force was large enough to accomplish the task if it so desired.<sup>25</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān did not appear to be very worried: in the fall of 1844 he left Herat with a force of 7,000 men to put down an uprising of the Tīmūrī Turkmens.<sup>26</sup> Since he left his capital with minimal defenses, he must not have feared for its safety.

During the first months of 1845, the situation changed. On February 22nd, Justin Sheil informed Lord Aberdeen that the Amīr Nizām, Mīrzā Taqī Khān, had issued orders that an army of several thousand men and thirty-six guns be readied to send to Khurāsān after the Iranian New Year, March 22. According to Sheil, the army was being sent to put down an uprising of the Kurds, under their chief, Ja'far Qulī Khān, and to prevent the Āṣif al-Dawlah from gaining too much power.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the presence of such an army in Khurāsān would also remind Yār Muḥammad

Khān of his vulnerability,

Yār Muḥammad Khān's actions in the spring of 1845 further alienated his Iranian masters. During the celebration of Naw Rūz (first week of spring) in Tehran, Yār Muḥammad Khān did not send the customary tribute to the Shah. An envoy with letters and gifts did arrive from the Bārakzay ruler of Qandahār, Kuhandil Khān, who claimed he was ready to serve the Shah, though not quite offering total allegiance to Iran. Sheil wrote Lord Aberdeen about the situation:

Kohen Dil Khan, the Chief of Candahar, has sent an agent to the Shah with presents on the occasion of the recent festival of the Now Roz. I have seen copies of the letters written by him to the Shah and to Hajie Meerza Aghasee without exactly declaring himself to be a subject of Persia, he makes professions of the utmost submission and of his readiness to obey the Shah's orders.<sup>28</sup>

By July of 1845, Yār Muḥammad Khān's conduct increasingly upset the Shah. He persisted in allowing the ex-ruler of Qā'in to launch attacks against the Iranian forces. The ex-ruler's soldiers came from Herat Province, and were provided aid by Yār Muḥammad Khān.<sup>29</sup> Though unsuccessful, the attacks were aimed against the Shah's control of Qā'in and threatened their dominance over Khurāsān as well. They also represented a direct threat to the son of the Governor of Khurāsān, who commanded the garrison in Qā'in.

### The Āṣif al-Dawlah Increases His Power

The deteriorating health of the ruler of Iran further complicated affairs in Khurāsān that year. Rumors were rampant that the Shah was dying. In anticipation of Muḥammad Shāh's passing, the Āṣif al-Dawlah began raising a large army to be ready to support a brother of the Shah, Bahman Mīrzā, in an attempt to take the throne away from the Crown Prince, Nāṣir al-Dīn Mīrzā.<sup>30</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'zam, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, was cognizant of the situation and wanted both the British and Russian ministers in Tehran to prevent the Āṣif al-Dawlah from interfering in the dynastic succession process. The British minister, Sheil, refused because he did not want the Russians to be involved. He knew the Iranians would not ask one side to intervene without the other. As a result, neither side became involved.<sup>31</sup>

When the Shah did not die, the Āṣif al-Dawlah disbanded his troops, which he had claimed were only going to be used against the rebellious chiefs of Sīstān. A cholera epidemic in Khurāsān was another factor in disbanding the Governor's troops. Yār Muḥammad Khān himself was stricken with cholera, which explains why he was not personally involved in any military expedition during that fall.<sup>32</sup>

During this same period, the Tikah Turkmens, with apparent support from the Khān of Kalāt-i Nādirī, began to

raid the territory around Mashhad. Since the beginning of the Qājār dynasty, Kalāt-i Nadīrī had remained independent of Iranian control, acting as a barb in the side of the Governor of Khurāsān. The Āṣif al-Dawlah responded to the latest series of raids by sending troops against the Khān, but they were ineffectual. This setback gave Tehran a good excuse to send troops to Khurāsān--troops loyal to the Shah rather than to the Āṣif al-Dawlah.

In January, Sheil received news from one of his Iranian informers that Hājji Mīrzā Āqāsī was boasting how in the spring of 1846 he would send an army of 40,000 men to Khurāsān to launch an attack against Afghanistan. According to the informer, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam did not know whether the Shah or the Crown Prince would accompany the army. The vizir was reputed to have stated:

This expedition would not be expoused (sic) to any interference on the part of England as he had obtained a declaration from the British government that it had no concern with the Affairs of Cabool.<sup>33</sup>

Because Hājji Mīrzā Āqāsī had confided to Sheil that preceding fall that an army was going to be sent to Khurasan, he tended to believe his informer's story.<sup>34</sup> In this case, Sheil thought that the vizir was referring to an announcement made in a dispatch on March 2, 1844 in which Aberdeen claimed that England was disinterested in the affairs of Afghanistan.<sup>35</sup> This official disinterest



appeared to encourage the Iranian military involvement in Khurāsān.

In early 1846, however, the Shah's health once again became a concern. He became paralyzed from the waist down, and no expedition took place.<sup>36</sup> The Shah's deteriorating health made it likely that a change in rulers would soon occur.

The Āṣif al-Dawlah's independent position in Khurāsān became a serious threat to the Crown Prince. Allāh Yār Khān, moreover, was still increasing his power. After a series of battles, his son Ḥasan Khān Sālār finally captured Kalāt-i Nādirī, thus solidifying the family's control over most of Khurāsān and northeastern Iran.<sup>37</sup> This benefited the Āṣif al-Dawlah, but not the Shah. Were the Shah to die, a strong and willful official in Khurāsān would pose a threat to Naṣir al-Dīn Mīrzā's succession to the throne.

In late summer, 1846, the Āṣif al-Dawlah sent an emissary, Mulla' 'Umar, to Tehran requesting permission from the Shah to attack Herat. Afraid that this would only result in Allāh Yār Khān gaining more power at the expense of the Shah, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam refused the request.<sup>38</sup> Allāh Yār Khān had not planned to act without allies in this attack. He had Afghan allies for his move against Herat: Shāh'pasand Khān from Lash and Juvayn; Dīn Muḥammad Khān,

one of the rebellious nephews of Yār Muḥammad Khān; and Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay, the nephew and brother-in-law of the late Kāmṛān Shāh, were all willing to help push Yār Muḥammad Khān out of power.<sup>39</sup>

The British minister, Sheil, believed that if the Iranians would not mount a military assault on Herat they could still accomplish the same goal by supporting the Afghan opponents of Yār Muḥammad Khān. The Qājār court favored the non-confrontation approach, while the Āṣif al-Dawlah pushed for a direct military takeover. The non-confrontation approach would later be used by the Iranians to gain control of Herat. But in 1846, the greatest problem for Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī was deciding how to limit the growing power of his rival, the Āṣif al-Dawlah. Turning down his request for a military takeover of Herat was one way to accomplish this.

Allāh Yār Khān was not one to accept a negative reply easily. When Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī rejected his request for an attack on Herat, his envoy, Mullā 'Umar, turned to the British. He asked Sheil for British permission to take Herat, informing the British minister that he did not care what the Shah of Iran thought.<sup>40</sup> Sheil replied that the British would not sanction or permit any disturbance or interference with the political relations of Afghanistan. The reason behind the adamant reply was that Lord Palmer-

ston had returned to the Foreign Office following a change in British Government.<sup>41</sup> Almost immediately the tone of the communications between Britain and Iran changed. Once again Sheil, voicing Palmerston's anti-Russian policies, strongly warned Iran against interference in Herat. The British once again took an active role to make sure political alignments on the highlands were to their liking.

On their part, in response to the Āṣif al-Dawlah's growing power and boldness, the Shah's court decided to send a large force to Khurāsān. The purpose of this action was more likely for checking the power of Allāh Yār Khān rather than to initiate an offensive campaign against Herat. Hājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī was too preoccupied with consolidating his power in Tehran to initiate any military action against Herat. Besides the position of Ṣadr-i A'zam, he assumed the offices of the head of finance, internal affairs, commander of the artillery, head of the royal foundry and arsenal, as well as the guardian of the shrine of Imām Riṣā at Mashhad.<sup>42</sup> Two of the most powerful men in the kingdom were building up to a confrontation.

#### Yār Muḥammad Khān Turns to the British

The growing power of the Āṣif al-Dawlah was also a threat to Yār Muḥammad Khān. When he realized his precarious position, he began to exhibit interest in obtaining British support once again.<sup>53</sup> But British minister Sheil

responded coolly to his inquiries because he had learned that Yār Muḥammad Khān had entered into an alliance with his new son-in-law Muḥammad Akbar Khān to take Qandahār from Kuhandil Khān. The reason for this new alliance was that Kuhandil Khān had refused to join Muḥammad Akbar Khān in a planned campaign against the British.<sup>44</sup>

Sheil was in a difficult position. While he did not want to cooperate with the ruler of Herat, he wanted to make sure that the province remained independent of Iranian control. When Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī informed him that the Iranians were sending 3,000 soldiers to Khurāsān, promising they would not travel to "Kandahar and Kabul," but failing to mention Herat, he decided Herat must be the target. Sheil hurriedly wrote Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī that he was conveying a message from "Viscount Palmerston His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs" and that the "British Government will not again with indifference tolerate any interference of Persia direct or indirect with Herat."<sup>45</sup> He also reminded him of the results of the last disagreement.

Sheil believed the army had three main goals: one, to punish the Kurd, Ja'far Qulī Khān, who had joined with the Turkmens in raiding the territory around Mashhad; two, to humble the power of the Āṣif al-Dawlah; and three, to curtail Turkmen banditry in Khurāsān.<sup>46</sup> Allāh Yār Khān

was himself in contact with Sheil concerning the Shah's demand that Ja'far Qulī Khān submit to him and return to Tehran. The Governor wanted Sheil to mediate the situation since Ja'far Qulī Khān refused to go to Tehran. The Governor hoped that Sheil would be able to obtain a guarantee of the Kurd's safety. But Sheil refused to become involved.<sup>47</sup> He decided to suggest to Yār Muḥammad Khān that he require the departure of any Shī'ah refugees who might be in Herat so the Iranian forces would not have an excuse to attack if they decided to go to Khurāsān after Ja'far Qulī Khān.

#### The Āṣif al-Dawlah in Disfavor

The Afghan, Shāh'pasand Khān, traveled to Tehran to ask for the Shah's help in removing Yār Muḥammad Khān from power. He was told that he would have to wait for the Shah's arrival in Khurāsān. The Shah considered leading an army to Khurāsān, but eventually decided against it. At this juncture, the Āṣif al-Dawlah, who had been Governor of Khurāsān since the beginning of Muḥammad Shāh's reign, argued old age and convinced the Shah to appoint him guardian to the shrine of Imām Riḏā at Mashhad, and to appoint his son, Ḥasan Khān Sālār, Governor of Khurāsān.<sup>49</sup> The Shah did this, contrary to the old practice of appointing rivals to these two positions in order to balance control.<sup>50</sup>

After receiving the two posts for his son and himself, Allāh Yār Khān tried to crush those in Khurāsān who gave their allegiance directly to the Shah and not to him. This group included the newly appointed Governor of the District of Nārdīn, Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān. This district governor had carried on campaigns against the Turkmens to impress the Shah in Tehran, and as a result, was keeping parts of Khurāsān in a state of unrest.<sup>51</sup> The Āṣif al-Dawlah ordered Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān's execution.

This unauthorized act was the final straw for the Shah, who ordered the Āṣif al-Dawlah to return to Tehran. From there he was sent on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and then into permanent exile at Karbalā.<sup>52</sup> Allāh Yār Khān had been the vizir of Muḥammad Shāh's father, and as the maternal uncle of Muḥammad Shāh, was one of the most powerful men in Iran.<sup>53</sup> The fact that the Shah appointed his archenemy Ḥājji Mīrzā Āqāsī the Ṣadr-i A'zam, along with the resultant loss of power he suffered when the Shah sent him to Khurāsān as Governor-General, often a form of internal exile, was always a cause for resentment.<sup>54</sup> But because of his membership in the royal family, and his strong power base, he had remained one of the two most powerful men in the kingdom. His known sympathy for the succession to the throne of someone besides the Crown Prince, however, along with his unauthorized actions in Khurāsān, and his disre-

gard for the authority of the Shah, led to his removal.<sup>55</sup> Thus his exile was a victory for Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, who had regarded him as his chief competitor for power.

Though the Āsif al-Dawlah was in exile, his family was still powerful. The Shah did not feel he could take the governorship of Khurāsān out of the family's hands without causing a major struggle for power, but he did not want the Ṣalār to be governor. So he sent another of the Asif al-Dawlah's brothers to Khurāsān as governor. Instead of replacing the Ṣalār, the uncle joined his nephew and rebelled against the Shah.<sup>56</sup> This rebellion tested Yār Muḥammad Khān's weak loyalty to the Qājār throne and his reaction gave the Iranians added incentive to occupy Herat Province.

#### Yār Muḥammad Khān Continues His Balancing Act

In April of 1847, Yār Muḥammad Khān launched a campaign into Hazārah territory northeast of Herat. He raided part of the territory by marching first through Qal'ah-i Naw and then to Maymanah. He captured a reported 12,000 Hazārah families, brought them to Herat Province, and settled them on land bordering Iran. Some of the chiefs of the Hazārahs escaped and went to Mashhad, where they received the protection of the Iranians.<sup>57</sup>

The Hazārahs were Shī'ah Muslims and had a close religious tie with the Shī'ah Iranians. One of the chiefs

of the Hazārahs, Karimdad Khān, appealed directly to the Shah for help against Yār Muḥammad Khān, offering to take Herat and deliver it to the Shah in exchange for his support.<sup>58</sup> In January of 1847, Dūst Muḥammad Khān's son, Muḥammad Akbar Khān, through an envoy, tried to make an alliance with the Shah against the British, promising that all of Afghanistan would submit to Iranian rule if the Shah provided aid.<sup>59</sup>

The Russian Foreign Minister, Count Nesselrode, when informed by the Russian minister at Tehran, D. I. Dolgorukov, of Muḥammad Akbar Khān's offer, wrote back. He hoped that Iran would not be duped by the promises of the Afghans. Above all, he warned Iran to "realize the exact price it would have to pay for the pretended submission of the Afghans."<sup>60</sup> Later the Russian advisor cautioned against confrontation with Great Britain. Apparently this had its effect: no aid was given to Muḥammad Akbar Khān.

In 1847, the Shah appointed one of his brothers, Prince Hamzah Mīrzā, the new governor of Khurāsān. The Āṣif al-Dawlah's son, Ḥasan Khān, refused to recognize the new appointment and continued his rebellion. He joined the Kurd, Ja'far Qulī Khān, whom the Shah had previously requested be sent to Tehran by the Āṣif al-Dawlah.

Early that year, Dūst Muḥammad Khān's son, Muḥammad



Akbar Khān, died unexpectedly in Kābul. The death did not significantly slow down Yār Muḥammad Khān's plans, as he was able to work out an alliance with Dūst Muḥammad Khān the following spring while the rebellion against the Shah went on in Khurāsān. Yār Muḥammad Khān, with the assistance of Dūst Muḥammad Khān's family, captured the northwestern towns of Shirbarghan, Sar-i Pul, and Khulm. He then prepared to march toward Bukhārā.<sup>61</sup> While Yār Muḥammad Khān was working with the Bārakzay of Kābul, Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār had written to Hamza Mīrzā asking for his support in a campaign against Herat. Yār Muḥammad Khān, in turn, appealed to the Shah for help against Kuhandil Khān.<sup>62</sup>

The British minister, Sheil, felt that Yār Muḥammad Khān was safe in his city since he was reportedly popular with the people of Herat. Sheil did not think the Shah could do anything about it:

...considering the disorganization of his army, the bankrupt condition of the Government finances, and the disturbed state of Khurasan it appears an impossibility for the Shah to comply with the request of the Chief of Candahar, however strong his desire may be to do so.<sup>63</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān played a game of balancing one side against the other. When the Kurd Ja'far Qulī Khān rebelled, he was forced out of Iranian Khurāsān and had to flee to Herat. Yār Muḥammad Khān gave him refuge and

refused to turn him over to the Iranian officials.

### The Death of the Shah

The death of Muḥammad Shāh, on September 4, 1848, further complicated the political problems in Khurāsān. Nāṣir al-Dīn Mīrzā, the Crown Prince, had the support of the nobility in Tehran, the British and the Russians, and became the new Shah. Most of the chiefs of Khurasan joined the son of the Āṣif al-Dawlah in rebellion. Yār Muḥammad Khān did not. He sent aid to the Governor of Khurāsān, Prince Ḥamzah Mīrzā, and continued to hold Ja'far Qulī Khān as a prisoner. When the rebels besieged Mashhad and trapped the Prince Governor in the citadel, Yār Muḥammad Khān made plans to go to Mashhad with adequate provisions and 2,000 soldiers to rescue him.<sup>64</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān was acting out of self interest. The Governor had promised him guns and muskets and the territories of Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām and Maḥmūd'ābād in return for his assistance. Both of these areas were on the edge of the territory of Herat Province, and would greatly add to Yār Muḥammad Khān's holdings,

The chief mujtahid in Mashhad tried to convince Ḥamzah Mīrzā not to ask the Afghans for assistance. He considered them unbelievers because they were Sunnīs. Ḥamzah Mīrzā rejected the mujtahid's request.

Yār Muḥammad Khān knew that both the British and

the Russians would support the Crown Prince, and added his support by siding with Ḥamzah Mīrzā. In a letter to acting British minister Farrant, he said:

Now that the two great governments of England and Russia have agreed that the successor in Persia as in other countries would be hereditary and there should be no disturbance and rebellion, if the Persians with respect to the King, should rebel, I who am a servant of Persia with 30 or 40,000 Afghans am ready in Khurasan and expect their heir apparent to become king. If I hear from you that anyone opposes the succession of the heir apparent, I by God's assistance with a well tempered sword will lay their rebellious heads in the dust.<sup>65</sup>

The wily ruler of Herat had decided it was better to support the monarch whose power base was far away in Tehran than the Āṣif al-Dawlah's rebels in Khurāsān. If the rebels were successful, they would probably attempt to absorb Herat Province into a new political unit, as Allah Yar Khan had wanted to do earlier.

On October 20, 1848, Nāṣir al-Dīn Mīrzā entered Tehran after his trip from Tabrīz where he had ruled as Crown Prince. Qājār court officials and the Prince's mother had worked diligently to gain support for the new Shah from the British and the Russians, and the rest of the Qajar aristocracy. The sixteen-year-old Nāṣir al-Dīn Mīrzā was immediately crowned King and he appointed Mīrzā Taqī Khān the Amīr Niẓām, his most powerful attendant, thus ending more than six weeks of speculation in Tehran.<sup>66</sup>

### The Attack on Mashhad

When Yār Muḥammad Khān entered Mashhad with his forces, he brought with him Ja'far Qulī Khān, whom he hoped to use as an emissary to convince Ḥasan Khān to surrender. He sent the Kurd to the Salār's camp to discuss the issue with him. But Ja'far Qulī Khān, who had been held captive in Herat for over a year, had no desire to help either Yār Muḥammad Khān or the Prince Governor, and joined up with the Salār.<sup>67</sup>

While Yār Muḥammad Khān's plan to use Ja'far Qulī Khān had backfired, he did succeed in getting Prince Ḥamzah Mīrzā out of the besieged citadel. But as the Salār's forces were too strong, he and the Prince had to withdraw towards Herat Province.<sup>68</sup> After being helped out of a dangerous situation, Ḥamzah Mīrzā informed Yār Muḥammad Khān that the territories earlier promised to Yār Muḥammad Khān actually belonged to the Shah, and therefore could not be given up. Ḥamzah Mīrzā angrily told Yār Muḥammad Khān to go back to Herat before he would have cause to repent.<sup>69</sup> Yār Muḥammad Khān withdrew, but sent an agent to Tehran to seek remuneration and to find out which political factions in Tehran were most influential.<sup>70</sup> The situation in Khurasan remained a stalemate since Prince Ḥamzah Mīrzā's forces were not powerful enough to defeat those of the Āsif al-Dawlah's son.

Negotiations began between the Amīr Nizām and the Salār. While they did not bring an end to dissension, they caused Ja'far Qulī Khān to desert the Salār after the Shah offered him a pardon. The Salār, however, refused to come to any agreement, and the Amīr Nizām dispatched a new army to Khurāsān under Prince Sulṭān Murād with orders to put down the rebellion.<sup>71</sup>

The Iranians were still unable to take Mashhad. They eventually were forced to join again with Yār Muḥammad Khān to besiege the city. Farrant, the acting British minister, conferred with the Amīr Nizām, warning him to be careful in dealing with Yār Muḥammad Khān: "I advised him to be very cautious of this well-known intriguer, who was not to be trusted and would eventually give him much trouble."<sup>72</sup> Farrant reported to Lord Palmerston that the Amīr Nizām agreed with his description, but added that the Shah wanted to show Yār Muḥammad Khān some appreciation for his help against the rebels in Khurasan. The Amīr Nizām had recently received a communication from the Bārakzays of Qandahār claiming that they were servants of the Shah. No doubt the Amīr Nizām knew that Kuhandil Khān and his brothers hoped to take Herat for themselves. Under the circumstances, he decided to send a robe of honor to Yār Muḥammad Khān, and to bestow on him the title of Zuhar al-Dawlah.<sup>73</sup>

In July of 1849, the Amīr Nizām told Sheil, who

had returned from a trip to England, that Prince Sulṭān Murād Mirza's army had surrounded Mashhad.<sup>74</sup> With the new army and Ḥamzah Mīrzā, along with the Afghan troops sent by Yār Muḥammad Khān, Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā put the city under siege.

Yār Muḥammad Khān was not acting out of any sense of loyalty. He intended to be rewarded for his services. In January of 1850, an agent arrived in Tehran from Yār Muḥammad Khān, claiming a payment of 60,000 tomans was due for the expenses he incurred by sending his troops to Mashhad.<sup>75</sup> If the payment could not be made, he was willing to accept the districts of Khvāf and Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām instead.<sup>76</sup> The British minister had information that Yār Muḥammad Khān had actually occupied the districts under the pretense of protecting them from the rebels.<sup>77</sup>

In April of 1850, Mashhad capitulated to the combined Iranian and Afghan forces. Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā did not sack the city, but agreed to accept a payment of 100,000 tomans instead.<sup>78</sup> The successful suppression of the rebellion in Khurāsān can be traced to the additional troops from Tehran, the desertion of Ja'far Qulī Khān, and the help from Yār Muḥammad Khān. If Yār Muḥammad Khān had joined the salar in rebellion there could have been a prolonged insurrection which might have threatened the rule of the Qājār dynasty.

Every move by Yār Muḥammad Khān seemed calculated to both preserve and increase his own power in "post-rebellion" Khurāsān. About the time the conflict ended in Mashhad, he began extending his control elsewhere, while strengthening his alliance with Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul. He also sent troops to the Amīr of Bukhārā for his attack against Maymanah and Andkhuy.<sup>79</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān maintained formal contact with the Shah by sending envoys, but had never offered his submission. Thus Yār Muḥammad Khān's alliance with the Bārakzay ruler represented a possible threat to the Shah, as Yār Muḥammad Khān could decide to join with the Amīr of Kābul and break his connection with the royal house of Iran.

Yār Muḥammad Khān benefited from the turmoil in Khurāsān. Many of the merchants who had moved to Mashhad during the Iranian siege of Herat in 1836-37 went back. Since Yār Muḥammad Khān had been able to protect Herat during the insurrection in Khurāsān, his territory seemed a stable refuge from which they could carry on trade.<sup>80</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān's increasing influence was followed closely in Tehran. On the 5th of August, a messenger from the Amīr Niẓām arrived in Herat with a verbal message stating that if Yār Muḥammad Khān really wanted to be a devoted servant of the Shah, he should do the following:

...strike coin and recite the customary prayers in the name of his majesty--that it may be known to all other states that Yar Muhammad Khan is a servant of the Shah and that Herat belongs to his majesty, so that if at any time an army should be sent there we (Qajar court officials) might have a proper answer to give.<sup>81</sup>

Yār Muḥammad Khān ignored the instructions, and through his envoy in Tehran, Mīrzā Buzurg, he reiterated his request for reimbursement for his services in Mashhad. The Amīr Nizām refused his offer to accept land in payment. As a result, the envoy from Herat contacted the British minister Sheil, asking that England undertake the protection of Herat and form a more "intimate relation" with Herat. The envoy also asked for aid so that Yār Muḥammad Khān could take Maymanah, Sīstān, Lash, and Juvayn. Once again the British minister declined.<sup>82</sup> Unknown to the British, however, Yār Muḥammad Khān was already attacking these areas.

The Iranians were aware of the Afghan raids into Sistan and acquiesced. The newly founded Tehran Gazette discussed the raids. The newspaper claimed the raids were carried out with the court's permission. In the article, Yār Muḥammad Khān was referred to as "Zuhur al-Dawlah," the honorary title bestowed on him earlier because of his assistance in Khurāsān.<sup>83</sup> When British minister Sheil read the article, he told Lord Palmerston it was further evidence that the Iranians would establish control over Herat



if they could.

The ruler of Herat was still steering a semi-independent course. While helping Iran in Khurāsān to his own advantage, he had also maintained independent contacts with Dūst Muḥammad Khān in Kābul and the Amir of Bukhārā. At the Amīr of Bukhārā's request he ceased his expedition to Maymanah, for a reported payment of over 30,000 tomans.<sup>84</sup> And even after the Amīr Niẓām's request, he persevered as before, not bothering either to change the coinage or the Friday prayer. By the summer of 1851, Yār Muḥammad Khān was stronger and acting more independently than at any time since he and Kāmran Shāh had written the original letters of submission to the Shāh in the spring of 1841. The Iranians appeared to be running out of patience with him.

Justin Sheil, who was in Iṣfahān in June, received a report that two to three hundred soldiers at a time were being sent to Mashhad for a planned attack on Herat.<sup>85</sup> According to the information available to Sheil, four thousand troops were already massed in Mashhad. Taylor Thomson, the acting British representative in Tehran, asked the Amīr Niẓām about the troops. The Amīr denied any intention of attacking Herat. He claimed that the troops had to move to Khurāsān to put down the continued pillaging of villages by the Turkmens.<sup>86</sup>

Unknown to everyone in Tehran, Yār Muḥammad Khān

died on June 7, 1851, while returning from an attack against the allies of Kuhandil Khān in Lash. News of his death set off a flurry of activity at the Shah's court, which was temporarily in Isfahan. The plum now seemed ripe for the picking and the Iranians did not waste any time taking advantage of the situation. The British wasted even less time in warning the Shah to stay out of Herat's affairs.<sup>87</sup>

Events in Herat between 1838 and 1851 represent a transitional phase in the political relations of Herat. Because of the British invasion of Afghanistan, Kāmrān Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān submitted to the Shah's control in writing in order to find an ally during a very unstable period. After the withdrawal of the British, however, Yār Muḥammad Khān maintained as much distance from Tehran as possible, manipulating each event to accent his own independence. Outward signs of this were his independent campaigns to the north, his political relations with the Amīr of Bukhārā, the marriage alliances and campaigns with the family of Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul, his refusal throughout his reign to mint coins in the name of the Shah or to say the khutbah in the Shah's name, or to allow any Iranian troops into his capital, and his attempt to negotiate territory in return for services, something no ordinary provisional governor would have dared.

These years mark a decline in intensity in the international rivalry between Great Britain and Russia in Central Asia and thus have commonly been viewed as a dormant period in the so-called "great game" for control in the area. This same period was also marked by a continuation and intensification of the regional conflict over control of Herat Province between the Qājār dynasty on the western Iranian highlands and various Afghan rulers of the eastern Iranian highlands. The events of these years are of particular significance as they represent a watershed in the Iranian-Afghan conflict over Herat Province.

Yār Muḥammad Khān's death removed a major obstacle to the Iranians' desire physically to occupy Herat Province. The renewed opposition to this involvement after Lord Palmerston's return to the Foreign Office in 1846, made the Shah more cautious of the approach to be used to subjugate Herat. While the methods were modified, the goal remained the same: the re-incorporation of Herat Province into a Shī'ah Iranian state.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/123 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (January 12, 1843) (hereafter cited as Great Britain with reel number).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. See correspondence covering January-May.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (February, 1843--no exact date).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Aberdeen (February 3, 1843) Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī-Yār Muḥammad Khān.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/124 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Aberdeen, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī-Yār Muḥammad Khān (n.d.).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>H. Farahbakhsh, Iranian Hammered Coinage (West Berlin: N. Farahbakhsh and Sons, 1975), pp. 113-118; and see also R. Colin Bruce, Standard Catalog for World Coins 1981, 7th ed. (Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 1981), p. 41. Yār Muḥammad Khān throughout his rule coined money anonymously with the inscription "Dar al-Salam" in the coin. The inscription implies the coins were minted at the capital of the state.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/124 Camp near Qazvin, enclosure in Sheil-Aberdeen, Mīrzā Abd'al Ḥasan Khān-Sheil (July 10, 1843).

<sup>14</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/125 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Aberdeen (February 16, 1844) Agent in Mashhad-Sheil. Yār Muḥammad Khān continually married off many of his daughters to the Bārakzay in Kābul. In fact, some time in the 1840's he arranged a marriage between one of his daughters and the small son of Afzal Khān, Abdur Rahman, who would rule Afghanistan 1880-1911. See Abdur Rahman, The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan (London: John Murray, 1900), I:4.

<sup>15</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/124 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (March 20, 1844).

<sup>16</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/119 Trabzon, Sheil-Palmerston (May 17, 1841).

<sup>17</sup>Dispatch No. 9 of March 2, 1844 cited in Great Britain, L/P&S/9/129 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (January 21, 1845).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/125 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Aberdeen (April 18, 1844) Fath Muḥammad Khān-Sheil.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Āghā Ibrahīm-Sheil (April 12, 1844).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/126 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (July 1, 1844).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (October 23, 1844).

<sup>27</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/127 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (February 22, 1845).

- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (March 28, 1845).
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., Camp near Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (June 17, 1845 and July 20, 1845).
- <sup>30</sup> Robert Grant Watson, A History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858 (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1866), p. 368 (hereafter cited as Watson, Persia); and Sipihr, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh-i Salāṭīn-i Qājārīyah, 4 vols. (Tehran: Kitāb Firush-i al-Islāmiyah, 1965), III:85 (hereafter cited as Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh).
- <sup>31</sup> Great Britain, L/P&S/9/128 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (November 10, 1845).
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (December 28, 1845).
- <sup>33</sup> Great Britain, L/P&S/9/129 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (January 21, 1846).
- <sup>34</sup> Great Britain, L/P&S/9/128 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (October 28, 1845).
- <sup>35</sup> Great Britain, L/P&S/9/129 Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (January 21, 1846).
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (March 17, 1846).
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Aberdeen (February 2, 1846).
- <sup>38</sup> Great Britain, L/P&S/9/131 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (September 30, 1846).
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (October 15, 1846).
- <sup>41</sup> Jasper Ridley, Lord Palmerston (London: Panther Books, 1972), p. 412.
- <sup>42</sup> Great Britain, L/P&S/9/131 Tehran, Sheil-

Palmerston (October 15, 1846).

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (September 2, 1846).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (December 28, 1846).

<sup>45</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/132 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (January 31, 1847) Sheil-Hājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī (January 25, 1847).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (February 28, 1847).

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Watson, Persia, pp. 343-344.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 344.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 343-344.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 344-345.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 343.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 344-345; and Mahdī Bāmdād, Sharh-i Hāl-i Rijāl-i Irān dar Qarn-i 12, 13, 14 Hijrī, 5 vols. (Tihiran: Bank-i Bazarghanī-ye Irān, 1967), I:155-158.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/134 Tehran, Farrant-Palmerston (January 25, 1848).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Farrant-Palmerston (September 23, 1847).

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., enclosure (February 10, 1847).

<sup>61</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/135 Tehran, Farrant-Palmerston (February 24, 1848).

<sup>62</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/136 Camp near Tehran, Farrant-Palmerston (August 24, 1848).

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Farrant-Palmerston (November 30, 1848) Yār Muḥammad Khān-Farrant (n.d.--probably early November, 1846).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Watson, Persia, p. 364.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 368; and Great Britain, L/P&S/9/136 Tehran, enclosure in Farrant-Palmerston (November 30, 1848) Correspondent in Mashhad (November 11, 1848).

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/137 Tehran, Farrant-Palmerston (January 30, 1846).

<sup>71</sup>Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh , III:208, 258.

<sup>72</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/137 Camp near Tehran, Farrant-Palmerston (June 24, 1849).

<sup>73</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/138 Tehran, Farrant-Palmerston (July 31, 1849).

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.



<sup>75</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/139 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (January 12, 1850).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (April 7, 1850).

<sup>79</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/141 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (September 25, 1850).

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (November 25, 1850), letter from Herat.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (March 16, 1851).

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (December 21, 1851).

<sup>85</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/143 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (July 17, 1851) Thomson-Sheil (July 17, 1851).

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (July 17, 1851).

## CHAPTER VII

### AFGHAN UPHEAVAL IN HERAT:

#### IRANIAN IRREDENTISM AND THE BRITISH REACTION

1851-1855

The death of the Afghan ruler of Herat Province, Yār Muḥammad Khān 'Alīkūzay, in June of 1851, presented the Qājār dynasty of Iran with the opportunity to establish complete control over Herat Province. For over fifty years the Iranians had strived without success to reincorporate Herat into their domain. Now, with their antagonist gone, this goal seemed within grasp. If they failed to take advantage of the political instability in Herat, they risked losing what influence they had so painfully gained there.

For over twenty years, Yār Muḥammad Khān had been unbending in his opposition to the penetration of Iranian influence in Herat Province. Though forced to recognize titular Iranian sovereignty in 1841, he had been able during his ten-year reign to maintain a state of virtual independence by refusing to mint coins or to say the khutbah in the Shah of Iran's name, or to allow the stationing of Iranian soldiers in his domain.<sup>1</sup> Backed by the

'Alīkūzay tribe, the other Sunnī Afghan tribes, the Herati Shī'ahs, and the Shī'ah Hazārah tribe in the province, he had a solid base of support from which to oppose Iranian encroachment.<sup>2</sup> He had been a realist, nonetheless, acutely aware of the necessity for maintaining peaceful relations with Iran. When he assisted the Iranians during the serious rebellion in Khurāsān between 1848 and 1850 which had threatened the foundations of the Qājār dynasty, he gained a degree of respect and gratitude from his competitors.

#### Renewal of Iranian Irredentism

By 1851 Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, the young Qājār ruler of Iran, had tired of Yār Muḥammad Khān's refusal to allow Iranian control and reportedly sent troops to Mashhad to threaten him. There is no substantial evidence that the Shah had the power to unseat him. Yār Muḥammad Khān's death presented Iran with an opportunity to expand its power in eastern Khurāsān at Herat's expense, while opening a Pandora's box of claims competing for his patrimony.

Sayyid Muḥammad Khan, Yār Muḥammad Khān's son, inherited nominal control over Herat Province, but he lacked his father's leadership abilities, relied on his Iranian mother for guidance, and at times was mentally unstable--all of which gave him a reputation for incompetence.<sup>3</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was unable to secure the

support of Herat's Afghan faction, and though his own 'Alīkūzay tribe acquiesced in his assumption of his father's titles, they actively participated in administering the affairs of government.<sup>4</sup> Though Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's mother was a Shī'ah, he had difficulty gaining the loyalty of the urban Shī'ah Tajiks. Furthermore, the Shī'ah Hazārah tribe, under Karīmdād Khān Hazārah, switched its support from the new ruler to Sulṭān Mūrād Mīrzā, the Iranian Governor of Khurāsān.<sup>5</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's reputation for incompetence encouraged challenges to his authority by local Afghan pretenders, including the relatives of the former Sadūzay rulers.<sup>6</sup> From the beginning of his rule many of the Afghan chiefs in Herat turned to their kin Kuhandil Khān Bārakzay in Qandahār, and Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay in Mashhad, the grandson of Fīrūz al-Dīn Shāh, ruler of Herat from 1800-1816, for aid in overthrowing the unwanted ruler.<sup>7</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān Bārakzay, Amīr of Kābul, with his dream of reviving the Durrānī kingdom, could not be expected to sit calmly by now that one of his major Afghan rivals had died. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's father had intentionally linked his son in marriage to one of the Amīr's daughters to prevent such an occurrence.<sup>8</sup> But with Yār Muḥammad Khān's death, his son was no longer immune from an attempt by Dūst Muḥammad Khān to reincorporate Herat into a

reunited Durrānī kingdom.

The young ruler of Herat was not alone in his fear of the Amīr of Kābul. The Shah's court worried that either Dūst Muḥammad Khān in Kābul, or his half brother Kuhandil Khān in Qandahār, might attempt to capture Herat.<sup>9</sup> The danger of an invasion by hostile Sunnī Afghans still threatened. The monarchy of Iran had not forgotten how the Safavid dynasty had toppled some 129 years earlier from an Afghan invasion.

Besides these regional considerations, the Iranians had to consider the reaction of the British Government to events in Herat. The continual conflict between Iran and Great Britain over the political status of Herat, while diminished during the 1840's, had never been settled.<sup>10</sup> By pursuing its irredentist claims in eastern Khurāsān in a more overt manner, Iran would surely raise the ire of the British.

Iran had to determine how best to maintain, and then increase its influence in Herat and at the same time placate the British. The long-term goal of the Iranians had not changed. With a young ambitious Shah on the throne, the rebellion in Khurāsān over, and no significant conflicts with other powers, the Iranians were willing to take increased risks to enhance their political position in Afghan Khurāsān. If the situation so merited, Iran

wanted once and for all to re-absorb Herat Province into the Iranian empire. As a first step, they decided to recognize Sayyid Muḥammad Khān as the legitimate ruler of Herat. They would treat him in the beginning as they had his father, offering assistance in return for political concessions.<sup>11</sup>

Since he lacked his father's strength, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān would have to secure much more than the faint "promise" of aid and support from the Shah as his father had. To stay in power despite efforts by his Afghan, Tajik, and Hazārah rivals to unseat him, he would have to have direct financial and military aid from his "sovereign" in Tehran. Because his mother was Iranian, she was more influential in getting him to appear more willing to rely on Iranian aid than his father had been. Providing this assistance would be difficult for Iran since the British were watching every move it made relative to Herat.

In mid-July, 1851, when Justin Sheil, the British minister at the Iranian court learned about the death of Yār Muḥammad Khān, he immediately informed the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. He assured Palmerston that he would consider it his duty to "renew the demands" he had recently made to the Iranian vizir, Mīrzā Taqī Khān, "for explanation and assurances as to the course which will be pursued by the Persian Government towards

Herat."<sup>12</sup> Sheil had suspected that the Iranian Governor of Khurāsān, Sulṭān Mūrād Mīrzā, might try to place one of the sons of the late Kāmārān Shāh back on the throne in Herat with the pretext that he was simply "reseating the former dynasty in the sovereignty of Herat."<sup>13</sup> After warning Palmerston of the possible ramifications of Yār Muḥammad Khān's death, Sheil contacted the Shah's vizir and questioned him on Iran's intentions in Herat.<sup>14</sup> Mīrzā Taqī Khān disclaimed any intention on the part of Iran to send troops to Herat.<sup>15</sup>

At this time the Iranians apparently had no intention of subduing Herat Province militarily. Soon after assuming power, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān sent a messenger with gifts to the Shah, asking for assistance in consolidating his position. In response, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh issued a firman appointing Sayyid Muḥammad Khān Governor of Herat and sent the envoy home with a jeweled sword, robe of honor, a horse with a gilded saddle, and a letter from Mīrzā Taqī Khān.<sup>16</sup> The sword and dress of honor, traditional gifts for newly appointing officials of the Qājār court, were important symbols signifying allegiance to the Shah. The letter from the vizir contained the price for the request for aid. Mīrzā Taqī Khān insisted that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān mint coins in the Shah's name and send a document sealed by the "Chief people of Herat declaring themselves

subjects of Persia."<sup>17</sup>

In 1841 the Iranian Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, had obtained a similar document from the ruler's father.<sup>18</sup> But he had been unable to convince Yār Muḥammad Khān to strike coins in the Shah's name.<sup>19</sup> Defiant Yār Muḥammad Khān had minted coins anonymously.<sup>20</sup> Now Mīrzā Taqī Khān demanded this concession and it appeared that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had little choice but to comply. In anticipation, the unofficial mouthpiece of the Iranian monarchy, the Tehran Gazette, began describing Sayyid Muḥammad Khān as the "Governor" of Herat, and his gifts as "offerings".<sup>21</sup> While the terminology upset the British minister in Tehran, it did not differ from that employed by the Shah's court since the beginning of the dynasty.

The communication from Mīrzā Taqī Khān to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān prompted Sheil to meet with the vizir to obtain assurances about Iran's goals in Herat. Sheil reported that the vizir stated:

...that any fears of the proceeding of the Persian Government with references to Herat would be purely gratuitous...(The) Ameer further affirmed that the Prince Governor of Khorasan had positive orders not to interfere with Herat under any circumstances by a military demonstration, without expressed orders from Tehran.<sup>22</sup>

Mīrzā Taqī Khān concluded that the Iranians did not have the "slightest intention of sending troops to Herat."<sup>23</sup> He warned that Iran had the option to do so if either the



Afghan Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul or Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār approached Herat to subvert Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's authority.<sup>24</sup> But when Sheil asked him if his statement were an official pronouncement of Iranian policy, the vizir intimated that though he could not make them official, Iran would act as if they were.<sup>25</sup>

Iran wanted to maintain, at minimum, the status quo in Herat, and to avoid outside interference. Therefore, when the ruler of Qandahār, Kuhandil Khān, sent a message to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh requesting an alliance in order to attack Herat, the Shah turned him down.<sup>26</sup> The Iranians did not want to help any Afghan effort to reunite the Dur-rānī kingdom. They had more to gain by working with Sayyid Muḥammad Khān than against him. Iran's policy in regards to Herat was consistent with the new strategy of gradually obtaining power in the province through non-military means. The Shah's court had adopted this method after the 1837 failure to take Herat by siege.

Shortly after the British minister found out about the request from Qandahār and Mīrzā Taqī Khān's policy against military intervention, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, with the encouragement of the royal family and the court, removed Mīrzā Taqī Khān from his position as chief vizir.<sup>27</sup> The Shah stripped him of all responsibilities except those associated with his position as head of the army. The

Shah then appointed Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī, the hardworking I'timād al-Dawlah, to the position of Ṣadr-i A'ẓām. Two months later the Shah took away the remainder of Mīrzā Taqī Khān's offices, and ordered the execution of his former vizir and brother-in-law.<sup>28</sup>

While bemoaning the method of the official's removal, Sheil could take temporary solace from the fact that the Russian minister at the Iranian court, Prince Dolgorukov, considered the new Ṣadr-i A'ẓām to be pro-British.<sup>29</sup> Sheil quickly made contact with the new vizir. Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī assured Sheil that Iran's policy had not changed. In a letter to Palmerston, Sheil reported:

I have the honor to inform your Lordship that the Sedr-i A'ẓīm renewed to me yesterday, the assurance to me relative to Herat given by the late Prime Minister as reported in my dispatch...of the 4th of October.<sup>30</sup>

The problem with these so-called assurances was that each side had its own interpretation of their meaning. The British interpreted the assurances as Iran's promise not to interfere in the affairs of Herat in any way which might jeopardize Herat's independence.<sup>31</sup> The Iranians viewed their commitment as a guarantee that they would not occupy Herat Province militarily, though they thought they had an absolute right to do so since the province was historically an integral part of Iran.<sup>32</sup> Each side was aware by the correspondence between them just what the other side's posi-

tion was, and so long as the status quo was maintained in Herat, the contradictions in the two interpretations could be overlooked.<sup>33</sup> Since the British feared that Iran would begin to extend its influence in Herat and that Russia would be the beneficiary, however, Sheil opposed the Iranian policy towards the province. British fears of Russia clouded their perception of Iran's legitimate concerns. The unstable political situation in Iran caused by the change in the highest court official had led even the Russian minister, Prince Dolgorukov, to advise the Iranians not to interfere in Herat.<sup>34</sup> The Russians, unlike the British, felt that Iran had a legitimate right to occupy Herat. Sheil remained suspect of Iranian motives:

The Persian Government has nevertheless betrayed lately a strong desire to exercise an armed intervention in the affairs of the principality under the pretense of establishing order. I have had more than one conversation on this subject with the Persian Prime Minister...<sup>35</sup>

The crisis in leadership in Herat disrupted the status quo. And though Sheil was not aware of it, Britain was having similar problems. Lord Palmerston had resigned from office at the end of December, 1851, after a dispute with Queen Victoria over his support for Louis Napoleon's coup d'etat in France.<sup>36</sup> His replacement, Lord Malmesbury, however, would maintain Palmerston's opposition to Iranian control of Herat.

### Iran Sends Military Assistance to Herat

During late fall, 1851, the political situation in Herat deteriorated further. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's cousin, Ghulām Khān, along with his supporters started an uprising in the streets of Herat. The parties reconciled, but Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's control was more than ever at the sufferance of the 'Alīkūzay tribal elders.<sup>37</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad Khān disliked his weak position and sent messages to Mashhad demanding help from Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, the Governor of Khurāsān, offering to turn Herat over to the Iranians in return for their military assistance. Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, under orders from Tehran not to interfere militarily in Herat Province, did not react immediately, but instead offered hope that something would be done in the future.<sup>38</sup>

Political instability in Herat was affecting the economy of the province. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was unable to secure the roads and caravan routes, leaving them open to pillaging by roving bands of Hazārah and Turkmen bandits.<sup>39</sup> Much of the caravan traffic avoided passing through Herat. Without the caravans, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was unable to pay his supporters, further weakening his position.<sup>40</sup>

On January 7, 1852, Sheil wrote Lord Palmerston that the new Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, Āqā Khān Nūrī, had informed him that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's numerous requests for military

assistance had finally been granted. The Iranians had assured Sheil that they had decided to help him, not out of a desire for conquest, but for three important reasons: one, to return the services rendered by Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's father; two, to restore tranquility in the province; and three, above all, to "oppose the designs of Dost Muhamed Khan of Kabul in that city."<sup>41</sup>

Sheil warned the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam about meddling in Herat.<sup>42</sup> Āqā Khān Nūrī responded that he would abstain from any kind of interference if the British would guarantee in writing they would prevent any attempt by Kabul or Qandahār to move on Herat. Sheil refused, stating he had no such authority.<sup>43</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam then offered to give Sheil one month's time to find out whether his government would agree to his proposal. In the meantime, the Iranians would dispatch a force of between two and three thousand men with eight guns to Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām and the area bordering Herat.<sup>44</sup> The vizir hoped that the presence of this force would encourage the people of Herat to submit to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's rule.<sup>45</sup> At the time, Sheil did not object to the Iranian plan. Communication with London would take at least three months, and he apparently hoped to stall until he received orders from the Foreign Secretary.

Sheil subsequently learned that the Afghan ruler

of Qandahār, Kuhandil Khān, had sent a force to invade Herat Province in December. The first target had been the town of Farāh, 160 miles southeast of Herat. The British agent in Mashhad informed Sheil that news of the invasion caused the Iranian Governor of Khurāsān to announce his intention of marching to Herat, and he had begun to collect troops.<sup>46</sup> Sheil contacted the Ṣadr-i A'zam, claiming that Iran had reneged on its promise to wait thirty days before taking any action. Responding to Sheil, Āqā Khān Nūrī said he had no information that the governor was moving towards Herat, but rather he was probably just chasing bandits on the border. The Ṣadr-i A'zam then reiterated Iran's position, to convince him the province would be invaded only if threatened from outside:

At an interview with your Excellency on the 10th of this month I distinctly stated and now again repeat it in a friendly way that for the sake of preserving order in the Province of Khorassan should any attempt be made from without (Cabul or Candahar) to reach Herat and take possession of that place, the Persian Ministers will feel themselves compelled on account of the disturbances which would ensue in Khorassan to afford the inhabitants of Herat that assistance which they consider themselves entitled to give, unless assurances are given to the Persian Government that no foreign force will interfere with that city.<sup>47</sup>

The Iranian position had not changed. What had changed was the political situation in Herat, which made it seem likely that Iran would actually send troops to the province, which in turn forced Britain and Iran to come to

grips with the inconsistencies in the two countries' positions. Two days after receiving the Şadr-i A'zam's letter, Sheil sent a reply which belittled the vizir's argument and warned him of Britain's reaction:

...if Persia should adopt a course opposed to the views and wishes of Great Britain, the Persian Ministers may rest assured that Great Britain will then take such steps as may be deemed necessary for the maintenance of English interests, and will carry out her policy regardless of Persia. The Persian Ministers are the best judges of the expediency of provoking such a result for an imaginary benefit.<sup>48</sup>

British policy assumed that British and Iranian interests were identical. The Iranians disagreed. The Şadr-i A'zam responded by reminding Sheil that: one, Iran considered Herat part of Iran, not part of Afghanistan; two, that after the Shah's troops established order in Herat they would be withdrawn; and three, that Iran was returning a debt owed to the people of Herat.<sup>49</sup>

Sheil, who was now more opposed than ever to Iranian intervention, cautioned Āqā Khān Nūrī against moving Iranian troops to Herat for any reason.<sup>50</sup> At this point, the Shah intervened in the diplomatic confrontation. He sent a message to the Şadr-i A'zam indicating that the vizir apparently had not explained Iran's position thoroughly: or why would the British representative object? The Shah then explained Iran's involvement in Herat similarly to the vizir's version (see Appendix I).<sup>51</sup> He

referred to the people of Herat as his servants, who "had tendered by authentic documents in the presence of the British Ministers their homage and obedience and conducted themselves as in former times, as servants of this government."<sup>52</sup> By "authentic documents" he no doubt was referring to the letters of subservience presented to Muhammad Shah Qājār in 1841 by Kāmārān Shāh Sadūzay and Yār Muḥammad Khān 'Alīkūzay--documents to which Sheil had not officially taken exception.<sup>53</sup>

The Shah's communication revealed his naïveté about the long smoldering dispute between Iran and Great Britain, as well as a desire to reach an amicable solution to the conflict. This was the Shah's first encounter with British intransigence. The young inexperienced ruler hoped that he could manipulate Britain. But Sheil, who had been in Iran since 1833, knew the Herat question well, and feared the long-term ramifications for Britain if Iran pursued its irredentist course.

Sheil responded in a letter to the Ṣadr-i A'zam, attacking Sayyid Muḥammad Khān and questioning Iran's wisdom, and indirectly the Shah's, for coming to his aid:

Let us examine who Syd Mahammed Khan is, and what claims he had to impose this obligation on the sovereign of Persia. He is a man of profound incapacity... He is the son of Yar Mohamed Khan the slave dealer and man stealer, the traitor, the usurper, the murderer of his sovereign. Is such a person, or his interests to be placed in competition with the long tried



friendship of Great Britain? Let him rule if he can, but let not Persia run the risk of coldness with an old ally for so worthless a person.<sup>54</sup>

Sheil's letter had little effect on the Shah's court. A chain reaction had begun.

The fact that Qandahār's ruler, Kuhandil Khān, had sent troops into Herat Province was justification enough for the Iranians to send aid to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān.<sup>55</sup> Afghans in Herat opposed to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's rule had reportedly asked the Qandahārī ruler to intervene.<sup>56</sup> The Iranians ordered the Governor of Khurāsān, Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, to dispatch an envoy to Herat. He sent Mīrzā Aḥmad Khān to Herat, and another envoy to Kuhandil Khan, telling him to withdraw his forces from Farāh. He backed his demand with a threat to attack if the warning went unheeded. In addition, the Governor ordered the chief of the Kurds in Khurāsān, Sām Khān, to gather his forces for a march towards Herat. The Kurds, as Sunnīs, would be less provocative to the Afghans of Herat. Finally, he dispatched the most important Afghan claimant to power in Herat, Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay, grandson of Fīrūz al-Dīn Shāh and the nephew of Kāmran Shāh, with a thousand horsemen and two guns, to Turbat-i Shaykh-i Jām to await orders.<sup>57</sup> All this indicated to the British minister that Iran had decided to disregard the British desire to keep Herat out of Iranian hands.

On March 3, 1852, the Ṣadr-i A'zam informed Sheil

that the Iranian army would be sent to Herat for no more than six months and it would withdraw as soon as it restored order.<sup>58</sup> Sheil protested, but was powerless to do anything.<sup>59</sup> He had not received a response from London to his letter of January asking permission to prevent Kābul and Qandahār from intervening in Herat. To compound difficulties for the British, on March 11 the Shah's court, through the Tehran Gazette, announced that the people of Herat had petitioned the Shah, professing sincere obedience and submission.<sup>60</sup> According to the Gazette, there would be no peace in Khurāsān until Iran put an end to the conflict and established order.<sup>61</sup>

Iran had finally decided to exercise its right to intervene militarily in Herat. It was difficult for the British minister to protest, knowing that the forces of Kuhandil Khān had taken the towns of Farāh and Sabzavar and were within sixty miles of Herat.<sup>62</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had ordered every shopkeeper in Herat to arm himself. Many Afghans of Herat did not want either Qandahārīs or Iranians to enter Herat.<sup>63</sup>

The Shah of Iran was anxious to begin operations. He feared that failure to aid Herat would allow the Afghans from Qandahār to take the province, and then the "hungry" Afghans would invade Iranian Khurāsān. The Shah was determined to protect what he viewed as Iran's national inter-

ests. He resented Sheil's intrusion into what he perceived to be an internal Iranian problem. He felt the British minister's advice against intervention was misguided, and hoped that the British would eventually keep the Afghans of both Qandahār and Kābul from invading Herat. But until Britain made such a pledge, Iran would continue its course.<sup>65</sup>

In the first direct military intervention by Iran, the Kurdish chief Sām Khān marched into Herat with about eight hundred horsemen.<sup>66</sup> He quickly convinced Sayyid Muḥammad Khān to arrest seven Afghan elders opposed to his rule and to send them to Mashhad.<sup>67</sup> Iran soon had to contemplate deeper involvement because of unfavorable reports coming out of Khurāsān.

A report from ʿAbbās Qulī Khān, one of the military commanders in Khurāsān, to the Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam predicted that Herat would soon fall to the Qandahārīs unless Iran supported Sayyid Muḥammad Khān with substantial military aid.<sup>68</sup> He told the vizir that Kuhandil Khān, accompanied by ten to twelve thousand men, had captured most of Herat Province south of its capital. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's lack of money to pay his troops or supply them with rations was causing chaos. The commander sought permission to invade Herat, claiming he could defeat the Qandahārīs and deliver the country over to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān.<sup>69</sup> He complained

that the Governor of Khurāsān had prevented him from going to Herat in spite of the grave threat from Kābul and Qandahār.<sup>70</sup> After receiving this report, the Shah gave ‘Abbās Qulī Khān permission to move to Herat. The Ṣadr-i A‘ẓam told Sheil later that he could get a counter order from the Shah, but whether the vizir told him this just to stall or whether he actually did so is unclear.<sup>71</sup>

The Shah had asked Sheil to send an envoy to dissuade the Qandahārīs from attacking Herat. When he learned the Shah had ordered troops to Herat, Sheil belatedly agreed to send the messenger, but only if "His Majesty would sign a document renouncing all rights to Herat and agree to recall his two agents."<sup>72</sup> The Shah agreed, on condition that the British would promise in writing to prevent Kuhandil Khān from occupying any portion of Herat's territory.<sup>73</sup> The British minister declined, citing lack of authority.<sup>74</sup> At this point, neither side was willing or able to compromise or to negotiate seriously.<sup>75</sup>

While the diplomats exchanged letters, an Iranian army of between ten and twelve thousand men under ‘Abbās Qulī Khan moved further east into territory claimed by both Iran and Herat.<sup>76</sup> When informed of the army's movement, Sheil protested that the Ṣadr-i A‘ẓam had broken his promise to keep the Shah's troops on the Iranian side of the frontier.<sup>77</sup> But since no established border separated

Herat Province from the Iranian Province of Khurāsān, it was difficult to know whether the army had actually entered Herati territory.

Sheil and the Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam waged a written debate over the disputed area. When Sheil communicated with London on April 21, 1852, however, he stated only that ʿAbbās Qulī Khān's army was "on the frontier" and not inside of Herat Province.<sup>78</sup> He reported that "Persian and Herati troops had defeated Kuhandil Khān on April 2 and had forced him to retreat to Farāh."<sup>79</sup> The "Persian" troops he referred to were the eight hundred who accompanied the Kurdish chieftain Sām Khān to Herat, and not the several thousand led by ʿAbbās Qulī Khān. Later Sheil learned that the Qandahāris had actually fled after ʿAbbās Qulī Khān's forces crossed into Herati territory and approached to within twelve miles of Herat.<sup>80</sup> By moving into Herati territory the Iranians saved Herat from capture by Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār. Their action was also aimed at preventing a possible attack from Kābul. Rumors of such an attempt circulated in Mashhad.

On May 4, 1852, Sheil again wrote to Malmesbury, this time raising the specter of what repercussions an Iranian occupation of Herat would have on the Russian position in Central Asia. By raising the Russian question, Sheil was much more likely to get a positive response from

London. As a Russophobe, he had objectives beyond merely preventing an Iranian victory in a regional conflict:

It can scarcely admit of doubt that the annexation of the Punjab and Scinde, and the occupation of the line of the Indus, have immensely increased the strength and power of the British Government to repel invasion or aggression. But I think it ought not be forgotten that the antagonist parties have at the same time approximated, and that the facilities and means of demonstration and aggression have increased. A few years ago England was on the Suttlej and Russia on the Arras, 1,400 miles from Herat, with the unfruitful Georgian provinces and the Caucasus behind her. Now Russia is at Asterabad, with the open sea and the Volga at the rear. I have brought to observation in a former dispatch that Herat being annexed to Persia, Russia enjoys the right, from which England is excluded of placing a consul in that city.<sup>81</sup>

Furthermore, Sheil believed that if Britain threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Iran, the Shah would have to back down.<sup>82</sup> Sheil wrote the Foreign Secretary again on June 7, suggesting that Great Britain sever relations with the Iranians if they continued on their course. He described the situation if Herat fell to the Afghans of Kābul or Qandahār because of an Iranian withdrawal:

Should Persia cease to interfere with Herat the presumption of the latter state falling into the hands of the Qandahar or Cabool chiefs may be entertained. In this event Herat would apparently have the same relation, at the worst, with the British Government that subsisted during the life of the late ruler. In the position now occupied by Great Britain on the Indus, it seems justifiable to believe that means not difficult of attainment would be found for preventing or delaying the introduction of Russian agents and Russian influence.<sup>83</sup>

For the second time in little more than a month, Sheil had expressed his concern over Russia gaining from the regional conflict in Herat Province.

It is doubtful whether Iran intended to occupy Herat for a long time or allow Russian influence there. Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh sent orders to 'Abbās Qulī Khān to move his troops back into Iranian territory.<sup>84</sup> 'Abbās Qulī Khān did not retreat immediately, but maintained his position outside Herat Province awaiting further instructions concerning Kuhandil Khān's forces in Farāh.

Presumably because they had helped push the Qandaharis southeast towards Qandahar, the Kurdish chief and his troops were able to enjoy a brief prominence in Herat. Along with the Iranian envoy they took quarters in the citadel. By the third week of May, 1852, the Afghans reoccupied the stronghold.<sup>85</sup> When Sayyid Muḥammad Khān refused Sām Khān's request to exile additional Afghans to Mashhad, they split.<sup>86</sup> Someone in the Iranian party had encouraged members of the Herati government to mint two hundred coins in the Shah of Iran's name without Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's knowledge. When the deception was discovered, relations were further strained.<sup>87</sup>

After retaking the citadel, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān felt strong enough to demand that the Iranians either drive the Qandahārīs out of Farāh or return to their own "coun-

try."<sup>88</sup> He then dispatched the Muftī (head of the Sunnī 'ulamā) of Herat to Tehran to convince the Shah to treat the province the same as in the time of Yār Muḥammad Khān. The Muftī also requested that the Shah recall his envoy, Mīrzā Aḥmad Khān, whom Sayyid Muḥammad Khān felt was trying to eliminate Afghan influence altogether in Herat.<sup>89</sup>

While Afghans loyal to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān tried to pressure Iran to reduce its influence in Herat, the Tehran Gazette announced that Herat was once again part of Iran:

At the present time...the whole of the people both high and low of Herat and of those parts seeing the safety and tranquility enjoyed by this ever enduring country prayed to be servants and subjects. It is a source of thanksgiving and gratitude for the subjects of this gov't that so extensive a country should with so much ease, at this time again form an integral portion of the exalted gov't.<sup>90</sup>

Despite asserting claim to Herat, it appears that Iran would settle for coinage and the khutbah in the Shah's name. Yār Muḥammad Khān had never agreed to these concessions which were now wrested from his desperate son.

#### The Delayed Settlement

During the remainder of the summer of 1852, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam and the British minister negotiated the evacuation of Iranian forces from Herat.<sup>91</sup> Āqā Khān Nūrī seemed cooperative, and on several occasion said that the troops



eventually would be removed. But the vizir dragged out the negotiations long enough to make sure Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was firmly in control and dependent upon Iran before he agreed to a settlement.

Finally, on August 22, 1852, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam informed Sheil that he had ordered 'Abbās Qulī Khān to withdraw into Iranian territory. He directed Sām Khān to reduce his force to one hundred and promised that those troops would leave once the Qandahārīs had evacuated Farāh.<sup>93</sup> He cautioned the British, however, that Iran would send troops to Herat again if it were threatened. Iran fully intended to keep the newly won concessions, including the minting of coins.<sup>94</sup>

Sheil responded with a stiffly worded protest accusing the Iranians of breaking their promises.<sup>95</sup> He realized that the minting of coins in the Shah's name was not only an expression of subservience but also direct recognition of sovereignty. Sheil wrote London for instructions since he did not have the authority to threaten Iran in the event that it kept interfering in Herat. Meanwhile he continued his attempts to persuade the Shah to withdraw his army.

The Iranians were willing to compromise. 'Abbās Qulī Khān's forces finally moved out of Herat in late August.<sup>96</sup> Sām Khān and the Iranian envoy left the city

along with several Afghans, including the youngest son of Yār Muḥammad Khān, a half brother of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān.<sup>97</sup> Sheil knew all this and was aware that the Afghans traveling with Sām Khān had not left Herat voluntarily, but were forced into exile to prevent them from opposing the pro-Iranian policies of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān.

Before Sām Khan's departure, and probably on his urging, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān began eliminating his Afghan opposition. He wrote the Governor of Khurāsān that five of the Afghan chiefs exiled to Mashhad were guilty of treason. The Governor promptly put them in prison, and accused them of plotting with the Hazārah to put Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay in power.<sup>98</sup> After Sām Khān left Herat, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān began arresting those suspected of opposing him. He even eliminated two members of his own 'Alīkūzay tribe-- Hashim Khān and Karīmdād Khān:

Ameer Hashim Khan Ali Koozaee and his brother Kareemdad Khan had been seized and severely tortured. The former was beaten with sticks on the belly until it burst, and the latter, had a circle of dough put on his head then boiling oil was poured upon his head--whatever property they possessed in money, shawls, and arms was taken from them.<sup>99</sup>

The Herati ruler seized the Afghans from Kābul who supported the rebellious 'Alīkūzays, plus twenty-two chiefs of the Afghan Bārakzay, Pūpalzay, and Achakzay tribes, and about one hundred persons from other tribes.

While Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was eliminating his

Afghan opposition, an envoy arrived from Kuhandil Khān to convince him not to side with the Iranians. The ruler of Qandahār promised not to interfere in Herat and would give back Farāh in return for Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's reassertion of his independence. The Herati ruler rejected his offer, verbally abused the rulers of both Qandahār and Kābul, and sent the envoy out of the city.<sup>100</sup>

Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had other problems. His local officials had not been paid since the death of Yār Muḥammad Khān and wanted their salaries.<sup>101</sup> The Governor of Khurāsān came to his rescue by sending an emissary to assemble those arrested by Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's orders. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān apparently was able to pay his servants with money and property confiscated from his opposition. By arresting tribal leaders and then fining them, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had alienated any potential base of support among his Afghan co-religionists and thus had to rely more than ever on the Shī'ah Iranians. The survival of the fragile coalition now depended on Iran more than ever, a situation that the Iranians were glad to encourage.

Iran had no intention of relinquishing its influence in Herat. The Shah issued a firman once again appointing Sayyid Muḥammad Khān "Governor" of Herat, in the same manner that the Shah appointed all his provincial governors. Another firman made his representative, 'Abbās Qulī

Khān Payan, the chief advisor to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān.<sup>102</sup> The British perceived these actions as direct threats to British interests. They equated Iranian influence in Herat with eventual Russian influence. The appointment of an Iranian advisor was significant in that it represented the first time during the Qājār dynasty that the Shah had been able to name a chief advisor to the ruler of Herat.<sup>103</sup>

#### Sheil's Indiscretion

During December of 1852, Sheil wanted to discuss the stalemate over Herat, but the Shah and his vizir were away on a hunting expedition.<sup>104</sup> Sheil was anxious to resolve the problem, since his two-year-old request to return to England for reasons of ill health had finally been approved.<sup>105</sup> In the third week of December, Sheil received Malmesbury's orders of October 27 instructing him to warn the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam that the Foreign Secretary would not meet the Shah's representative, Shafī' Khān, so long as the conflict over Herat remained unresolved.<sup>106</sup> While this was not as serious as breaking off diplomatic relations, it gave Sheil the leverage needed to push the Iranians into a compromise. Indeed the Iranians had no desire to break off diplomatic relations with Great Britain, and had not calculated that the British would go so far.

Sheil finally met with the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam during the first week of January. Having made some fundamental gains

in Herat, and feeling that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had eliminated most of his Afghan opposition, the Iranians seemed ready to end the diplomatic impasse. Sheil suggested that the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam write a letter pledging not to send troops to Herat unless Kābul, Qandahār, or another foreign power attacked the province. He wanted a guarantee that Iran would not interfere in Herat's internal affairs to any greater degree than it had during the rule of Yār Muḥammad Khān, which left Iran a wide range of options. Sheil also suggested that the monarchy renounce its demand for coinage and recitation of the khuṭbah in the Shah's name.<sup>107</sup>

After a series of meetings with the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, the British minister wrote out a proposed text of an agreement and sent it to Malmesbury on January 5, 1853, failing to mention he had drafted the engagement without the final approval of the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam. Sheil referred to his draft as the "document", and implied that the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam had signed it. Whether Sheil did this to speed up the negotiation process or out of a feeling of assurance is unclear, but there is no question that he intentionally misled his superior by saying that the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam had actually written and signed the engagement.<sup>108</sup> Sheil simply misrepresented the facts. He also included a proposed letter from the Shah in which the Shah rejected any claim to Herat while promising aid and support if Herat were attacked by

outside forces. Sheil did identify this letter as his own creation.<sup>109</sup>

On the following day, the Şadr-i A'zam informed Sheil that if Britain would formally disclaim "all right or intention to interfere in Herat, Iran would be willing to do likewise."<sup>110</sup> This was a snag in the negotiations which Sheil had not anticipated. His letters of January 5th and 7th containing the forged document had already left Iran. To cover his indiscretion, he sent another message to Malmesbury which included a letter received from the Şadr-i A'zam denying the existence of any agreement. Sheil blamed the Iranians instead of admitting his own poor judgment:

Your Lordship will observe the determination expressed by the Persian Government not to adhere to the arrangement the Sedr Azim concluded with me, and to require from His Majesty's Government a corresponding engagement, not simply to abstain from interference with the internal relations with the Principality. This proposal can only be regarded as an invasion to escape from an arrangement which was made under the first impulse produced by your Lordship's dispatch of the 27th of October.<sup>111</sup>

The Şadr-i A'zam wrote Sheil, repudiating any written agreement and challenging the minister to produce the document:

With regard to his excellency's repeated statements in his letters that the Persian Ministers had not kept faith on the subject of Herat with the engagements and official documents they had given and that they had not acted up to the assurances they had given on that subject, what promises or vouchers, besides the three demands

have been given on our part to you, and what now remains unfulfilled? Let those documents and engagements be produced, and if any of them be found (unfulfilled), they will undoubtedly be accepted most willingly and in the most friendly spirit by the Persian Minister.<sup>112</sup>

No documents existed and Sheil knew it.

On January 23, 1853, he indirectly admitted his error in a reply to the Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam while referring to verbal assurances that he felt they had exchanged:

I have the honour to receive your Excellency's letter of the 21st of January, in which you call on me to produce documentary evidence of your having concluded the arrangements so often referred to. I possess no vouchers of this sort, as your Excellency well knows. If I did, I would not discuss the matter further. But I possess a voucher of another sort, which among men of honour is superior to any document--your own affirmation.<sup>113</sup>

After this admission from Sheil, Āqā Khān Nūrī was ready to settle the dispute. Within two days, the two men reached an agreement as to the context of the engagement (see Appendix II).

### The Engagement of 1853

On close examination, the engagement proves to be a unilateral declaration on the part of Iran concerning Herat that failed to solve any of the outstanding differences between Britain and Iran. Iran pledged not to send troops to Herat unless Qandahār or Kābul or another foreign power attacked it.<sup>114</sup> This promise had a potentially dampening effect on Iranian irredentism as it inhibited Iran from

an internal uprising. Iranian troops had already forced the Qandahārīs to flee, leaving an advisor in Herat to help stabilize Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's rule.

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam promised that Iran would abstain from all interference in the internal affairs of Herat, "likewise in regard to occupation, or taking possession, or assuming the sovereignty or government..." Attached to this, however, was the reservation "except that the same amount of interference which took place between the two in the time of the late Zuheer-ud-Dowleh, Yar Mahomed Khan is to exist as formerly."<sup>115</sup> This reservation meant that Iran gave up little by its declaration, for Yār Muḥammad Khān had recognized titular Iranian sovereignty over Herat. The firman further stated that Iran would accept offering of money voluntarily struck in the Shah's name, something that Yār Muḥammad Khān had never allowed.<sup>116</sup> In reference to the khutbah, the Iranians compromised, stating they engaged to "abandon the pretension and demand" for the khutbah but would accept it voluntarily.<sup>117</sup> The concluding paragraph of the firman warned that the engagement would be "as if... nonexistent and invalid" if there was British interference in Herat "of any sort whatever."<sup>118</sup>

Sheil accepted the firman and a letter from the vizir addressed to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān in Herat, which briefly mentioned the firman, including the reservation.



In his letter, the Şadr-i A'zam made it clear that this declaration was a unilateral act on the part of Iran to preserve British friendship, and could be unilaterally withdrawn.<sup>119</sup>

After the Şadr-i A'zam signed the agreement, Sheil sent an agent from the mission to Mashhad to accompany the Iranian messenger taking the announcement to Herat. The Iranian court objected, as this agent was a Qandahārī, suspected of ulterior motives.<sup>120</sup> Iran claimed that Sheil was already interfering in Herat. Sheil let the Iranians know where Britain stood on the matter:

I beg to answer that I ascribe to myself the most entire freedom in communication with Herat: That I will send there whom I please, when I please and as often as I please, without reference to the Persian Ministers or communication or consultation with them as I would do to any other independent government.<sup>121</sup>

The crisis ended on May 7, 1853, when the new British Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, agreed to meet with Shafī' Khān, the Shah's representative in London.

At the end of the diplomatic confrontation Iran and Britain were as far apart as ever on the subject of Herat. Iran still claimed all the rights it had enjoyed in Herat during the reign of Yār Muḥammad Khān. The unilateral agreement carried the stipulation that it could be withdrawn at any time. The Iranians had included important reservations which rendered the document basically worth-

less. Sheil believed that the agreement had some value as a statement of Iran's adherence to a specific policy. The British did not sign the document; its unilateral nature allowed Britain to maintain its freedom to act.<sup>122</sup> One possible reason why Britain accepted such an indecisive settlement was the growing conflict between Russia and the Ottomans over the Danubian principalities and protection of Greek Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

Britain did not want to risk alienating Iran by attempting to force the signing of a treaty recognizing Herat's independence. Such a move could have pushed Iran into the Russian camp, a situation Britain wanted to avoid, especially in the event of war with Russia. While the agreement temporarily shelved the conflict between Britain and Iran over Herat, it put Sayyid Muḥammad Khān in peril. He could no longer rely on the Iranians in case of an internal uprising. By sending many of his Afghan opponents into exile and depending on Iran, he had limited his political options. Kuhandil Khān's forces were still in Farah, and Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul, who contemplated a campaign to conquer Qandahār, was now trying to entice Sayyid Muḥammad Khān into an alliance.

In late December, 1852, or early January, 1853, Dūst Muḥammad Khān proposed an agreement between himself and Sayyid Muḥammad Khān. He promised to support the

ruler of Herat if;

...our honored son should declare himself independent, solicit no other Gov't for assistance and consider our Royal Estates and property his own and his ours--one and inseparable, with his friends will be friends and with his enemies, enemies on such conditions that he will ask for one of our royal sons with whatever number of troops that may be required so that he should send them to him<sup>123</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān vowed to send the troops to repel those who, like the Iranians, transgressed on the "inheritance of the glorious and faithful tribe of Duranee."<sup>124</sup> To gain Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's favor, the Amir offered to order or compel his half brother Kuhandil Khān, by force, if necessary, to evacuate Farāh and its vicinity.<sup>125</sup>

Events in Herat had come full circle. Iran had withdrawn its forces, but still claimed its right to Herat. Britain continued to deny Iran had any legitimate claims there. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān still lacked a strong base of support. And Dūst Muḥammad Khān still wanted to bring Herat back into a reunited Durrānī kingdom. The only concrete result of the crisis for the British was a piece of paper filled with ambiguities which they could show to Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul as evidence of their friendship and later foist on an uninformed British public as partial justification for war against Iran over Herat.<sup>126</sup> Iran also gained, for Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was now more dependent than ever before on Iran, whether he liked it or not.

Sayyid Muḥammad Khān Reasserts His Power

The effects of the Iranian agreement with the British were soon apparent in Herat. 'Abbās Qulī Khān left Herat in mid-May for Mashhad, accompanied by Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's mother-in-law.<sup>127</sup> Their departure gave Sayyid Muḥammad Khān the opportunity to attempt to reconsolidate his power in Herat Province without Iranian interference.

During the Iranian presence in Herat there had been several clashes between Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's Sunnī Afghan and Shī'ah supporters. One incident ended in the death of twenty Afghans, and the fining and imprisonment of several others.<sup>128</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad Khān sided with the Shī'ahs because he did not have the allegiance of all the Afghans who had first supported Kāmran Shāh and then his father. His alliance with the Shī'ahs decreased his support even more among Sunnī Afghans. Further, those Afghans who did support him were upset because he had employed Turkmen marauders to attack the Qandahārī Afghans in Farāh. The Turkmens had captured many Afghans and sold them into slavery. To go to war against fellow Afghans was one thing, but to allow them to be sold as slaves violated their code of honor.<sup>129</sup>

The Herati ruler, however, was not satisfied with the support of the leaders of the local Shī'ah Hazārah and Jāmshīdī tribes who obeyed the orders of the Qājār governor

of Khurāsān, not his own. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān planned to replace the rulers of these tribes with ones more subservient to him.<sup>130</sup> His plan failed, and the British agent in Mashhad reported the Shī'ah tribes killed fifty of his supporters in a skirmish at the town of Kūshk.<sup>131</sup>

After the Iranian agent 'Abbās Qulī Khān left, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān began to reassert his power on the Hazārahs and Jāmshīdīs, who had enjoyed Iranian protection. The Hazārahs reportedly tried to ally themselves with the chief of Qandahār, and tried to convince Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay to join with them in an attempt to topple Sayyid Muḥammad Khān and to regain his family's throne.<sup>132</sup> To put an end to the conspiracy between the Hazārahs and Qandahārīs, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had killed Karīmdād Khān, the chief of the Hazārah tribe, and appointed a new chief loyal to himself. This action alienated his Shī'ah followers and angered the Governor of Khurāsān, who had hoped that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had learned by now that he was only a servant of the Qājār dynasty.<sup>133</sup>

Sayyid Muḥammad Khān wrote to Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, the Governor of Khurāsān, in August of 1853 for permission to attack Farāh and Qandahār. These towns remained under the control of his Afghan rival, Kuhandīl Khān. The Herati ruler had sent his troops to Farāh in January without opposition from the Governor. This time the Governor

refused.<sup>134</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was only a servant no matter what assurances the Iranians had given to the British. The Governor of Khurāsān also knew that Kuhandil Khān recently had sent a letter of submission to the Qājār court offering Qandahār to Iran. Thus he threatened military action if Sayyid Muḥammad Khān persisted in his plans.<sup>135</sup>

Sayyid Muḥammad Khān could not rule for long with Iranian aid or support from the pro-Iranian Shī'ah Hazārāhs. He had alienated the Hazārāhs by murdering their chief and Iran by planning an attack on Qandahār. Although Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was seen in Mashhad and Tehran as an ungrateful and disobedient servant, the Iranians could not remove him without facing other difficulties.<sup>136</sup> If they tried to replace him with someone more submissive, they could end up losing control of Herat. A possible alternative, Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay, was not a good candidate; as a son of a former ruler, and as a Sadūzay, he had the potential of acting more independently. The Qājārs had helped Sayyid Muḥammad Khān stay in power by arresting his Afghan opposition. Further manipulation could end in a general rebellion against Iranian interference and possibly result in an alliance between the Afghans of Herat and Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was therefore still useful to the Iranians.

The Iranians could also use Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's

continued dependence against both the British and Dūst Muḥammad Khān. In fact, on October 24, 1853, Āqā Khān Nūrī sent the British charge d'affaires Thomson a sealed letter from Sayyid Muḥammad Khān which vehemently condemned Britain for its past actions in Herat and declared in clear and unmistakable terms his subservience to Iran:

Herat is a portion of the Province of Khurasan and we the Afghans are subjects and servants of the Persian Government, especially myself who am of Persian blood and who am alive through the Shah's favor, and who has no other option but to obey and submit to its authority. My Government and my life are in its hands.<sup>137</sup>

Thomson was suspicious of the letter since the Ṣadr-i A'zam had personally given it to him. He hoped that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had sent the letter to please the Qājār court and then would communicate with him privately as to his true feelings.<sup>138</sup> The letter, nevertheless, gave the Iranians additional support for the claim to Herat.

The letter further upset Thomson as its seals were imprinted with the phrase "By the grace of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, Zahir al-Dawlah Sayyid Muḥammad Khān the title given to the Herati ruler when he was made "Governor" of Herat.<sup>139</sup> To make matters worse for Thomson, the unofficial court mouthpiece, the Tehran Gazette, of the 27th of October, announced the arrival in Tehran of one of the sons of Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār. It styled him the "Governor" of Qandahār and stated that he had declared himself a ser-

vant of the Shah of Iran.<sup>140</sup> Kuhandil Khān had to turn to the Shah now because his half brother, Dūst Muhammad Khān, was threatening from Kābul.

Thomson thought he understood Iran's motives and relayed them to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon:

...full evidence is obtained that the Persian Government, not withstanding their engagement with Great Britain to abstain from interference in the internal affairs of the principality of Herat, have not only no intention of fulfilling their engagement, but are at the present moment endeavoring to extend their power and to push their intrigue to the detriment of British influence through out the whole of Afghanistan.<sup>141</sup>

Thomson incorrectly interpreted the primary long-term goal of the Iranians to be the ejection of the British from India, not the reunification of post-Safavid Iran. He believed, moreover, that the Shah was acting out of vanity and lust for power. Thomas, who did not question his own country's motives, described the Iranians as dangerous competitors who sought to cause upheaval in British India:

There can be no doubt that the aim of the present Shah and his Government is not so much to consolidate his power by the development of the resources of these possessions which have reached him by inheritance as to gratify his vanity by extending his sway to other countries, which even if obtained, would not add to his own strength, but would certainly afford him great facilities for exciting strong agitation in the frontier provinces of British India.<sup>142</sup>



Sayyid Muḥammad Khān did not like being surrounded by Iranians or lacking the support of his Afghan subjects. He attempted to break out of the vise by negotiating with Allāhdād Khān, an agent from Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul. The agent earlier had come from Kābul to discuss the possibility of an alliance between Herat and Kābul against Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān appointed Nāṣir Allāh Khān as his envoy. The envoy and the Amir's representative left for Kabul to complete negotiations. When hostilities broke out between Dūst Muḥammad Khān and Kuhandil Khān, however, the Qandahārīs arrested the envoys upon their arrival in Qandahār and confiscated their baggage and horses.<sup>143</sup>

Sayyid Muḥammad Khān also indirectly approached the British. A merchant brought a message from Herat asking Thomson for 40,000 musket flints and an annual subsidy so that Herat could end its close association with Iran.<sup>144</sup> Thomson did not feel obligated to respond. He knew that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was trying to get aid from whatever source possible and felt no loyalty to the British or anyone else.<sup>145</sup>

The conflict between the rulers of Kābul and Qandahār was opportune for Sayyid Muḥammad Khān. He attacked the Qandahārīs at Farāh and was able to retake the fort which had been under Qandahārī siege since 1851.<sup>146</sup>

During early fall, another representative arrived from Kābul proposing an alliance between Kābul and Herat. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was inclined to accept, but fearing a negative reaction from the Iranians, he procrastinated by sending Dūst Muḥammad Khān a reply claiming that he was engaged in an expedition to Marv and could not act. He promised, however, that he would send his son with a force as far as Farāh--something he had already done--but could not join in the expedition himself.<sup>147</sup>

The Shah's court responded to Kuhandil Khān's request for aid by taking three actions: one, they sent Kuhandil Khān's son back to Qandahār with an Iranian military officer to train the Qandahārī forces and they sent a thousand muskets manufactured in Tehran; two, they dispatched an envoy, 'Abd Allāh Khān Sulṭānī, to both Kuhandil Khān and Dūst Muḥammad Khān with letters from the Shah ordering an end to their dispute and demanding "harmony"; and three, they issued orders through the Governor of Khurāsān to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān, threatening him with an attack if he joined Dūst Muḥammad Khān against Kuhandil Khān.<sup>148</sup>

#### Iran Continues to Interfere in Herat, Qandahār, and Kābul

The attitude of the Shah of Iran and his court had not changed since the times of his great-grandfather Faṭh 'Alī Shāh. They viewed Afghanistan as part of their inher-

itance.<sup>149</sup> The January, 1853 agreement with the British had little effect on the actual policy pursued by the Iranians in Afghan Khurāsān. It was Iran's desire that Herat, Qandahār, and Kābul remain separate from one another. Iran was determined to side with the one who suffered aggression from the others.<sup>150</sup> If Dūst Muḥammad Khān reunified Afghanistan, it would present a direct threat to Iran. The Iranians were ready to defend Sayyid Muḥammad Khān as governor of an Iranian province. In the Tehran Gazette of January 12, 1854, the rulers of Kābul and Qandahār were publicly referred to as "Governors", and it was announced that the court has sent them "orders to desist from their conflict."<sup>151</sup>

One reason for the renewed Iranian boldness in claiming Herat and Qandahār was the outbreak of the Crimean War on October 4, 1853, between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Britain wanted Iran to remain neutral in the conflict, and the Iranians knew it.<sup>152</sup> The Russian minister at the Qājār court, Prince Dolgorukov, promised that with the war's conclusion Iran would gain Ottoman territory, or a large indemnity. He further pledged that the debt owed by Iran to Russia from the Treaty of Turkmanchay would be canceled.<sup>153</sup> Apparently, unknown even to his own Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam, the Shah signed an agreement to that affect. When the Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam learned of the plan, he objected. The

British charge d'affaires Thomson threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Iran if the Shah went through with the agreement. Eventually, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam's opposition and British pressure convinced the Shah to change his mind. In the meantime, Dolgorukov had informed his government that the Shah had signed. When he was told that the Shah had changed his mind, he struck Aqa Khan Nuri on the leg with his cane. This emotional outburst eventually led to his replacement.<sup>154</sup>

When Thomson's first dispatch about the Shah's agreement with the Russians reached London, it caused havoc. The British Cabinet decided to send a force to occupy Khārg Island in the Persian Gulf. The order was rescinded when it was learned that Iran had decided to maintain its neutrality.<sup>155</sup>

In early January, 1854, Lord Clarendon, in a letter to the Iranian Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, impressed upon Āqā Khān Nūrī the need to remain neutral in the Crimean War and to fulfill Iran's engagements over Herat.<sup>156</sup> But by not siding with Russia, the Iranians had calculated they could risk being more aggressive in dealings with Herat, Qandahār, and Kābul, assuming that the British would not risk alienating Iran by insisting on a strict compliance with the 1853 engagement over Herat.

Sayyid Muḥammad Khān resented the "order" from the

Shah. In a curt reply he accused the Iranians of helping his enemy and warned that he would seek an alliance with the British or even Russia:

...now that the Candahares are (sic) have become our enemies, you take their part and wish to march troops against us, thus leaving us no other resource than to seek the protection of Russia or England. You have ordered us not to permit people from the English to come to Herat and (if they do) to expel them. Why do you allow them to come? Since you can not prevent them what power have we to drive them out of this place. We Afghans are not in the habit of throwing people out of their houses.<sup>157</sup>

Sayyid Muḥammad Khān did not wait for a response from the Iranians but immediately sent a letter to charge d'affaires Thomson requesting aid, pledging loyalty to the British, and asking for a British agent to visit Herat to work out an agreement.<sup>158</sup> Thomson was unwilling to help at this time and sent a message to Herat denying rumors that Britain wanted to support Sayyid Muḥammad Khān. Political conditions with Russia had grown worse and war seemed likely.<sup>159</sup>

On March 14, 1854, just two weeks before Britain and France declared war on Russia, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam told Thomson that Iran was willing either to stay neutral or join Britain against Russia. By the time the request arrived in London, both Britain and France were at war and Iranian neutrality seemed to be the best situation for Britain. Iran remained neutral throughout the remainder of

the war.<sup>160</sup>

Upset with Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's new belligerency, the Shah sent Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay to take control as District Governor of the lands between Mashhad and Herat in Iranian territory.<sup>161</sup> As a Sadūzay, and as the grandson of a former ruler of Herat and nephew of Kāmran Shāh, Muḥammad Yūsif had a claim to the throne of Herat. His grandfather had fled to Iran in 1818 and his father had spent years intriguing against Yār Muḥammad Khān.<sup>162</sup> He had support among the Afghans of Herat who had grown weary of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's incompetence, and among the Hazārahs, who never forgave Sayyid Muḥammad Khān for killing their chief.<sup>163</sup> Muḥammad Yūsif went to the village of Mahmūd'ābād, where he received letters of support and five hundred cavalry.<sup>164</sup> The British agent in Mashhad wrote Thomson about rumors circulating in Mashhad that the Iranians had decided to allow Muḥammad Yūsif to take Herat to put it more directly under their control.<sup>165</sup> In fact, Muḥammad Yūsif had sent agents to Herat to rally support among his father's old friends.<sup>166</sup>

While Muḥammad Yūsif was moving to his post, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was camped on the outskirts of Herat, trying to collect troops to use against the Qandahāri forces in the defense of Farāh. Kuhandil Khān had already taken the town of Gīrīskh. To finance his venture, Sayyid Muḥammad

Khān ordered five months' taxes paid in advance, a measure which caused resentment among the merchants, who bore the brunt of the burden.<sup>167</sup> In May of 1854, the Herati ruler lodged and fed an army of Iranians returning from a campaign in Marv. He met them about sixteen miles from Herat. No doubt he wanted to intercept them before they approached too close to his capital. He sent an envoy and escort with them to Mashhad. The envoy, Sārdār Ṣalīḥ Khān, continued to Tehran with letters to the Iranians expressing his ruler's devotion to the Shah and giving as proof Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's treatment of the Iranian troops returning from Marv.<sup>168</sup>

On July 4, 1854, 'Abd Allāh Khān Sulṭānī, the Shah's envoy to Qandahār and Kābul, arrived in Kābul. The agent carried letters from the Shah, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, and the Governor of Kirmān to convince Dūst Muḥammad Khān to stop interfering in Qandahār.<sup>169</sup> The letters demanded that Dūst Muḥammad Khān obey his Shah and return all territory taken from Qandahār. If he did not, the Shah would align with Kuhandil Khān against him.<sup>170</sup> The letters were framed in the traditional manner of Shah to subject, which angered Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>171</sup> The ruler of Kābul did not change his plans to go to Qandahār. After a month, the envoy left Kābul. If anything, the Shah's intervention in favor of Kuhandil Khān increased Dūst Muḥammad Khān's desire to take

Qandahar.<sup>172</sup>

In the fall of 1854, Ja'far Khān, Dūst Muḥammad Khān's agent to the Shah, returned by way of Herat.<sup>173</sup> He carried another set of letters from the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam recommending an alliance to keep the British out of Afghanistan. But Dūst Muḥammad Khān could not be persuaded to offer his submission to Iran.<sup>174</sup>

#### The Fall of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān

In September of 1854, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān reportedly met with the Governor of Khurāsān and his vizir, who was the brother of the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam.<sup>175</sup> It is not clear what happened, but by February of 1855, the Herati ruler sent an envoy to the Khān of Khīva at Marv with gifts and friendly messages. This was a direct affront to the Iranians, who were at war with the Khan.<sup>176</sup> His action soon brought a protest from Mashhad. The Iranians told him to end his communication with Khīva and provide troops to fight the Khan. Sayyid Muḥammad Khān apparently did not respond.<sup>177</sup>

While Sayyid Muḥammad Khān seemed to be courting the Khān of Khīva and thus putting distance between himself and the Shah, the Amīr of Kābul, ignoring the overtures made to him by Iran, signed a "treaty of perpetual peace and friendship" with Britain. The British, fearful of Russian moves toward India during the Crimean War, initiated



the discussions. Dūst Muḥammad Khān was worried about Iranian influence in Herat and Qandahār, and reciprocated. The treaty, consisting of three articles respecting each country's territories, was signed on March 30, 1855.<sup>178</sup> Dūst Muḥammad Khān's willingness to sign a treaty with the British indicated he had given up his attempt to win over Sayyid Muḥammad Khān to his cause. The Herati ruler became further isolated as he could not expect any aid from Kābul unless he gave up his connection with Iran.

During the next six months, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's position in Herat deteriorated. The Herati Hazārahs, in alliance with Afghan nobles in the city, asked Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay to come to Herat to assume control.<sup>179</sup> Muḥammad Yūsif did not go himself, but in late August or early September sent his brother Muḥammad Rizā and some Hazārah Shī'ahs to Herat. In a general revolt, part of Herat's military forces, led by Sartip 'Abbās Khān, and a large groups of Hazārahs went over to Muḥammad Yūsif's cause. All but one of the 'Alīkūzays in the city refused to help Sayyid Muḥammad Khān.<sup>180</sup> Rebels surrounded the citadel where Sayyid Muḥammad Khān resided with his family. After a day, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān surrendered, on the condition that he and his family would be spared. The insurgents agreed to the terms and sent Sayyid Muḥammad Khān and his family as captives to Kuhsan.<sup>181</sup>

The rebellion in Herat apparently occurred without the knowledge or support of the Iranians. When Muḥammad Yūsif learned of the successful attack, he secretly left Mashhad, fearing that the Iranians would prevent him from going.<sup>182</sup> They sent a force to bring him back, but he eluded them.<sup>183</sup> The Iranians wanted to get Sayyid Muḥammad Khān and his family turned over to the Governor of Khurāsān. Ignoring the request of the Iranians, Muḥammad Yūsif had Sayyid Muḥammad Khān, his mother, and two sisters executed, and then married one of his widows, actions he would not have taken if the Iranians had planned the takeover.<sup>184</sup> Faced with a fait accompli, the Governor of Khurāsān decided to extend an olive branch. He sent Ghulām Riẓā, Muḥammad Yūsif's brother-in-law, as the envoy to Herat. On orders from Tehran, the Governor also removed the sentries around Muḥammad Yūsif's house and restored his property.<sup>185</sup>

Within a short period, Muḥammad Yūsif gained control. A Sadūzay prince once again sat on the throne of Herat. Like his predecessor, he was a captive of Iran, but unlike Sayyid Muḥammad Khān, he was anxious to pacify the Shah and his court. He told them he did not immediately travel to Herat when he heard of its capture because he had not been authorized, but later did so because he feared the province would be lost to the "foreigners", meaning non-

Afghans.<sup>186</sup> The Iranians quickly recognized Muhammad Yusif as the new Governor of Herat and bestowed their blessings upon him. And just as his Afghan predecessors had done, he tried to wrest free from Iranian control.

The fact that since the beginning of Muḥammad Shāh's reign the Qājārs had succeeded in reasserting limited Iranian hegemony over Herat encouraged Nāṣir al-Din Shāh to continue Iranian involvement in Herat and to extend it to Qandahār and Kābul. While the British were involved in the Crimean War, they could not be as adamant about Herat as they were in the 1830's. Afghan resistance to Iranian domination remained the main obstacle for Iran. The Shah's unwilling subject Sayyid Muḥammad Khān was dead. Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay's assumption of power in Herat was a setback, and the next two years would prove fatal to Iran's irredentist designs on Afghanistan.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>H. Farahbakhsh, Iranian Hammered Coinage (West Berlin: N. Farahbakhsh and Sons, 1975), pp. 104-110; see also R. Colin Bruce, Standard Catalog for World Coins 1981, 7th ed. (Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 1981), p. 41. Yār Muḥammad Khān during his entire rule coined money anonymously with the inscription "dar al-salām" on the coin. The inscription implied the coins were minted at the capital of his domain.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fayz Muḥammad Hazārah bin Sayyid Muḥammad Muḡhul, Sirāj al-Tavārīkh (Kābul: Matba'ah-i Hurūfī, 1925), pp. 211-212 (hereafter cited as Hazārah, Sirāj al-Tavārīkh). This history, written during the first half of the reign of Amīr Habibullah Khān of Afghanistan (1901-1918) is one of the few early Afghan histories which discusses Sayyid Muḥammad Khān in Herat in any detail. It was also written early enough that the author might have discussed the situation in Herat with those who had actually been involved. This is the only source the present author knows which gives a specific date for Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay's entry into Herat in 1855. See also Sipihr, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh-i Salāṭīn-i Qājārīyah, 4 vols. (Tehran: Kitāb Firūsh-i al-Islāmīyah, 1965), IV: 133-135 (hereafter cited as Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh). This work, written by the court chronicler of Naṣīr al-Dīn Shāh (1848-1896) gives the Qājār dynasty's view of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's reign, but does not go into much detail. The Afghan and Iranian historians listed above both agree on Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's incompetence and his calling on the Shah of Iran for help against his Afghan rivals.

<sup>4</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/146, Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (January 7, 1852) Agent in Mashhad-Sheil. Enclosures from the British paid Iranian agent at Mashhad were written in Persian and then translated into English. Unless otherwise stated, these enclosures should be considered translations. Hereafter cited as Great Britian with reel number.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Granville (March 5, 1852).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (Jan-

uary 7, 1852) Agent in Mashhad-Sheil.

<sup>7</sup>Hazārah, Sirāj al-Tavārikh, pp. 211-212.

<sup>8</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/125 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Aberdeen (February 16, 1844) Agent in Mashhad-Sheil.

<sup>9</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/146 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (October 4, 1851).

<sup>10</sup>Iran did not give up its claim to Herat until forced to by Great Britain in the Treaty of Paris of 1857.

<sup>11</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/144 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (October 4, 1851).

<sup>12</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/143 Iṣfahān, Sheil-Palmerston (July 17, 1851).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/144 Iṣfahān, Sheil-Palmerston (July 22, 1851).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (October 1, 1851). Sheil quoted a letter from British consul Ronald Thomson. See also Hazārah, Sirāj al-Tavārīkh, pp. 211-212.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/119 Trabzon, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (May 17, 1841) Kāmrān Shāh-Shah of Iran, and Yār Muḥammad Khān-Shah of Iran (thought to be written in early 1841).

<sup>19</sup>Farahbakhsh, Iranian Hammered Coinage, pp. 100-102; and a personal interview with Mr. William Spengler, noted expert on Afghan coins, in Omaha, Nebraska (September, 1978).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/145 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (November 4, 1851).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (November 9, 1851).

<sup>27</sup>Robert Grant Watson, A History of Persia From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858 (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1866), pp. 397-408 (hereafter cited as Watson, Persia).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/145 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (November 21, 1851); and Watson, Persia, p. 411.

<sup>30</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/145 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (November 22, 1851).

<sup>31</sup>See correspondence L/P&S/9 series 1830 to 1857. There are numerous occasions when specific explanations of each country's policies were made.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/145 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (December 29, 1851).

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Jasper Ridley, Lord Palmerston (London: Panther Books, 1972), pp. 533-540).

<sup>37</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/146 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (January 7, 1852) Agent in Mashhad-Sheil.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid. This letter was not included in Great Britain: Foreign and State Papers 1854-1857 vols. XLV, XLVII (London: William Ridgeway, 1865), nor was it laid before Parliament. Possibly it was deleted because: one, it showed that the Iranians had informed the British they intended to sent aid to Herat; two, that they would send troops to the border area; and three, that Sayyid Muḥammad Khān had asked for military help from Iran.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/146 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (January 20, 1852) Agent at Mashhad-Sheil (December 25, 1851).

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Ṣadr-i A'ẓam-Sheil (January 14, 1852).

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Sheil-Ṣadr-i A'ẓam (January 16, 1852).

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Granville (February 14, 1851) Ṣadr-i A'ẓam-Sheil (January 22, 1852).

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Shah-Ṣadr-i A'ẓam (January, 1852).

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Shah-Şadr-i A'zam (January, 1852).

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/119 Trabzon, enclosure in Sheil-Palmerston (May 17, 1841) Kāmrān Shāh-Shah of Iran and Yār Muhammad Khān-Shah of Iran (thought to be written in early 1841).

<sup>54</sup>L/P&S/9/146 Tehran, Sheil-Palmerston (January 20, 1852).

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Granville (March 7, 1852) Şadr-i A'zam-Sheil (March 3, 1852).

<sup>56</sup>Hazārah, Sirāj al-Tavārīkh, pp. 211-212.

<sup>57</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/146 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Granville (March 3, 1852), translation of the substance of a letter from the agent at Mashhad (February 9, 1851).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Granville (March 7, 1852) Sheil-Şadr-i A'zam (March 5, 1852).

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Granville (March 15, 1852) extract from the Tehran Gazette (March 11, 1852).

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Agent at Mashhad-Sheil (February 24, 1852).

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Granville (March 22, 1852) Shah of Iran-Şadr-i A'zam.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.



<sup>66</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Granville (March 26, 1852).

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Granville (April 8, 1852) report from 'Abbās Qulī Khān, Commander of the 5,000-Şadr-i A'zam (March 17, 1852). The Şadr-i A'zam gave this up to Sheil to convince him of the necessity for Iranian intervention in Herat. This letter was never published or laid before Parliament.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Granville (March 31, 1852).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Granville (April 5, 1852) enclosure of (April 2) Şadr-i A'zam-Sheil and (April 5) Sheil-Şadr-i A'zam.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Granville (April 21, 1852).

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/147 Tehran, Sheil-Malmesbury (May 1, 1852).

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Malmesbury (May 4, 1852).

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Malmesbury (June 7, 1852).

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (June 7, 1852) Agent at Mashhad-Sheil (April-May, 1852).

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., Shirkish, Sheil-Malmesbury (July 28, 1852).

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., enclosure, extract from Tehran Gazette (July 8, 1852).

<sup>91</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/147.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury, Şadr-i A'zam-Sheil (August 22, 1852).

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (August 31, 1852) Sheil-Şadr-i A'zam (August 24, 1852).

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/142 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (October 22, 1852) Agent in Mashhad-Sheil (September 15, 1852).

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Agent in Mashhad-Sheil (October 5, 1852).

<sup>102</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/148 Tehran, Sheil-Malmesbury (November 14, 1852).

<sup>103</sup>Sheil claimed that this individual had been appointed the vizir. But he actually was an advisor.

<sup>104</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/148 Tehran, Sheil-Malmesbury (December 22, 1852).

<sup>105</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/149 Tehran, Sheil-Russell (February 28, 1853).

<sup>106</sup>Great Britain, Foreign and State Papers 1854-1857, Vol. XLV, Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (January 5, 1853) Tehran, Sheil-Şadr-i A'zam (December 17, 1852), p. 704.

<sup>107</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/148 Tehran, Sheil-Malmesbury (January 5, 1853).

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., enclosure, translation of a letter proposed to be written by the Shah to Sayyid Muhammad Khān.

<sup>110</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/149 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (January 7, 1852) Şadr-i A'zam-Sheil (January 6, 1852).

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (January 7, 1852).

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Şadr-i A'zam-Sheil (January 6, 1852).

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Sheil-Malmesbury (January 23, 1853).

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (January 30, 1853) Engagement contracted by the Iranian Govern-

ment relative to Herat, Ṣadr-i A'ẓam-Sheil (January 25, 1853).

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (January 30, 1853) Ṣadr-i A'ẓam-Sayyid Muḥammad Khān (January 26, 1853).

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Russell (February 17, 1853) Mīrzā Sayyid Khān-Sheil (February, 1853).

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Sheil-Mīrzā Sayyid Khān (February 9, 1853).

<sup>122</sup>PRO FO 60/125, Sheil-Hammond 2 Chester Square (December 13, 1856), cited in R. Walters, "Across the Khyber Pass: British Policy towards Afghanistan 1852-1857," University of Pennsylvania, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1974, p. 40 (hereafter cited as Walters, "British Policy").

<sup>123</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/154 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (May 25, 1854) Engagement offensive and defensive offered by Dūst Muḥammad Khān to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān, 1269 A.H. (December 13, 1852-January 15, 1853).

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>Walters, "British Policy," p. 41.

<sup>127</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/150 Camp near Nādrnāmah, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (June 15, 1853).

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., Camp near Imāmah, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (July 4, 1853).

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., Camp near Imāmāh, Thomson-Clarendon (June 18, 1853).

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

<sup>134</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/149 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Russell (March 15, 1853) extract from a letter from the agent at Mashhad (February 1, 1853).

<sup>135</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/151 Camp near Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (October 14, 1853) Agent in Mashhad and a person in Herat (September 10, 1853).

<sup>136</sup>Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., Camp near Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (October 26, 1853) Sayyid Muḥammad Khān-Thomson (received October 26, 1853).

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., Camp near Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (October 29, 1853).

<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (November 16, 1853) translation of a letter from a person in Herat (September 24, 1853).

<sup>144</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/152 Tehran, enclosure in

Thomson-Clarendon (December 17, 1853) exact translation of a letter from Herat (October 27, 1853).

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (November 20, 1853).

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (November 16, 1853).

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (December 17, 1853) extract of a letter from Herat (October 24, 1853).

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (March 11, 1854) translated extract of a letter from the agent in Mashhad (February, 1854).

<sup>149</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/153 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon, Tehran Gazette (January 12, 1854).

<sup>150</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/152 Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (December 20, 1853).

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.

<sup>152</sup>PRO, FO 60/177 Draft to Thomson No. 30 FO 12 (August, 1853), cited in Walters, "British Policy," p. 72.

<sup>153</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/152 Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (November 15, 1853).

<sup>154</sup>Watson, Persia, p. 82; and L/P&S/9/152, Tehran.

<sup>155</sup>For an excellent explanation of the British reaction see Walters, "British Policy," pp. 71-87.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>157</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/153 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Palmerston (March 12, 1854) Sayyid Muḥammad Khān-Thomson (received March 4, 1854).

<sup>158</sup>Ibid.

159 Ibid.

160 Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (March 14, 1854) Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam-Thomson (n.d.).

161 Great Britain, L/P&S/9/154 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (May 26, 1854) Agent in Mashhad-Thomson (April 20, 1854).

162 Sipīhr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh, IV:133-135.

163 Ibid.

164 Great Britain, L/P&S/9/154 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (May 26, 1854) Agent in Mashhad-Thomson (April 20, 1854).

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (July 19, 1854) Agent in Mashhad-Thomson (May 9, 1854).

169 Walters, "British Policy," p. 193.

170 Ibid. Cites Indian Office Records S.L. 39 For. Dep., No. 34 (August 9, 1854) enclosure No. 3, Sayyid Ḥasan al-Dīn Sayyid Ayahudī, excerpt, Kābul (July 5, 1854).

171 Ibid.

172 Ibid.

173 Great Britain, L/P&S/9/155 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (September 25, 1854) Agent in Mashhad-Thomson (n.d.).

174 Walters, "British Policy," p. 154; and Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Camp near Lar, enclosure in Murray-

Clarendon (August 20, 1855) Ṣadr-i A'zam-Dūst Muḥammad Khān.

<sup>175</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/155 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (October 12, 1854) Agent at Mashhad-Thomson (September 25, 1854).

<sup>176</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, enclosure in Thomson-Clarendon (March 24, 1855).

<sup>177</sup>Ibid.

<sup>178</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, trans. and ed., The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics 1535-1914, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. I:310.

<sup>179</sup>Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh, IV:133-135.

<sup>180</sup>Hazārah, Sirāj al-Tavārīkh, pp. 222-223.

<sup>181</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (October 19, 1855) Agent at Mashhad-Murray (September 17, 1855).

<sup>182</sup>Ibid.; and Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh, IV:133-135, says that he went to Herat without permission.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid.

<sup>184</sup>Walters, "British Policy," p. 209, argues that "it is extremely difficult to conceive of Muḥammad Yūsif as anything except a Persian nominee and client." Sayyid Muḥammad Khān alienated the Afghans who had supported him. He allowed Turkmens to sell Afghans into slavery. He destroyed the coalition of Shī'ahs and Sunnīs that had supported his father. It is my view that the evident indicated that Muḥammad Yūsif acted because the Afghans and Shī'ah Hazārahs wanted him in Herat not because the Persians nominated him or ordered him to go. At the same time, Muḥammad Yūsif like his predecessor was caught between two antagonists and tried to pacify the Iranians in any way possible in the beginning to prevent them from attacking him.



<sup>185</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (November 15, 1855) Agent at Mashhad (2nd to 20th of Safar/14 October to 8 November 1855).

<sup>186</sup>Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh , IV:135.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FINAL CAMPAIGN

1855-1857

The execution of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān 'Alīkūzay and the seizing of Herat Province by Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay and his supporters in the fall of 1855 further complicated the already unstable political situation in eastern Khurāsān. These events brought to power a hereditary claimant--not only to Herat, but to the Sadūzay throne of the old Afghan Durrānī sultanate as well.<sup>1</sup> The Qājār monarchy of Iran had never recognized the legitimacy of the Durrānī kingdom created by Aḥmad Shāh Sadūzay, considering the Afghans rebellious subjects. When the weak Sayyid Muḥammad Khān came to power in Herat in 1851, he had to rely on Iran more than any other Afghan ruler in Herat of the preceding hundred years. His successor, Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay, once again provided the disgruntled Herati Afghans with a potentially viable alternative to Qājār control and a means of checking further Iranian encroachment.

While British diplomats in India debated Muḥammad Yūsif's motives for taking power and wondered whether the Shah of Iran had secretly backed him, the court in Tehran

knew otherwise. Muḥammad Yūsif was not an Iranian pawn, nor was he as pliable as his predecessor, and he would ultimately attempt to sever Herat's ties with Iran.<sup>2</sup> The rise to power of this Sadūzay was a serious setback for Iranian efforts to dominate Herat Province through manipulation of Afghan political rivalries. In order to reestablish its hold on Herat, Iran needed not only time to assess Muḥammad Yūsif's power base, but also a means to prevent the British from interfering in the regional conflict, a seemingly impossible task. The British opposed Iranian efforts to absorb Herat, feeling this would weaken their own position vis-a-vis the Russians in Central Asia.

From mid-summer 1855, the Iranian government and the new British minister to the Qājār court, Mr. Charles Murray, former British Consul in Egypt, were embroiled in a dispute over consular privileges and the right to hire Iranian subjects to serve on the British legation's staff. This disagreement, originally unrelated to the Herat question, had a profound effect on Herat, led to the rupture of political relations between Iran and Great Britain, and contributed to the outbreak of the second Anglo-Persian war. The dispute became known as the Mīrzā Hashim Khān affair.

#### The Mīrzā Hashim Khān Affair

Mīrzā Hashim Khān, brother-in-law of Nāṣir al-Dīn

Shāh's wife, had been a protege of the Iranian vizir Mīrzā Taqī Khān, the Amir Kabir.<sup>3</sup> After the Shah removed his mentor from office in November of 1851, Mīrzā Hashim Khān had difficulty with the new Iranian Ṣadr-i A'zam, Āqā Khān Nūrī, Mīrzā Taqī Khān's rival.<sup>4</sup> Mīrzā Hashim Khān's request for a raise in pay was refused. According to British sources, the Ṣadr-i A'zam told him in a heated exchange that he was free to work for anyone who could pay him more. Thus in the fall of 1854, he sought work at the British legation.<sup>5</sup>

The Ṣadr-i A'zam knew there were no other positions in the Iranian court more lucrative than the one Mīrzā Hashim Khān had held, but apparently the vizir did not think he would seek out the British.<sup>6</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'zam and the Shah did not want a high-ranking Iranian official and brother-in-law of the Shah working for a foreign government, especially for the British. Subsequently, when William Taylor Thomson, charge d'affaires of the British legation, appointed Mīrzā Hashim Khān first Persian secretary, the Ṣadr-i A'zam vigorously objected.<sup>7</sup> Thomson wrote the British Government, then under Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, for instructions. Palmerston's Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, replied that it was not "expedient to challenge the Persian Government's decision."<sup>8</sup> As a result, Thomson dropped the appointment.

Thomson then considered appointing Mirza Hashim Khan as the legation's political agent at the Iranian city of Shīraz. Clarendon was agreeable as long as Mīrzā Hashim Khān "succeeded in obtaining a formal discharge from the Persian Government and also their approval in this action."<sup>9</sup> Mīrzā Hashim Khān not only did not secure the approval of the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, but had to remain at the legation for fear of punitive action by the Iranian authorities.

Thomson was overstepping the bounds of protocol. The British could not legally place a political agent in Shīrāz as it was not one of the three cities mutually agreed upon as consular sites. What upset the Iranians was not where the British employed Mīrzā Hashim Khān, however, but that they had attempted to employ him at all.<sup>10</sup> But Thomson was setting no precedent. The British had made use of agents in Shīrāz, apparently to compete for trade with the Russians, who were empowered under Article X of the 1928 Treaty of Turkmanchay to place consular officials wherever they chose in Iran.<sup>11</sup> While the Iranian monarchy could excuse previous unofficial British agents, they firmly opposed the employment of a member of the royal family.<sup>12</sup> Murray thus found a member of the Shah's family in de facto sanctuary at the British legation when he arrived in the country as British minister.

Two months after his arrival, Murray resurrected the Mīrzā Hashim Khān question and pursued the matter of who had sovereignty over Iranian subjects to a confrontation with the vizir. Murray argued that as a recognized employee of the British Government, Mīrzā Hashim Khān was protected by treaty provisions.<sup>13</sup> He insisted that the Ṣadr-i A'zam, Āqā Khān Nūrī, recognize Britain's de facto agent at Shīrāz. The vizir, as guardian of Iran's sovereignty, refused to allow Mīrzā Hashim Khān's appointment. He was unwilling to cede any more privileges to a foreign power. He felt that protection of Iran's right to approve Iranians in British employment could prevent the British from meddling any further in Iran's internal affairs.<sup>14</sup>

The Mīrzā Hashim Khān dispute was Murray's third major disagreement with the Ṣadr-i A'zam during his first few months in Tehran. The first, a conflict over the right of the British legation to give its protection to another out-of-favor member of the royal family was amicably settled earlier.<sup>15</sup> The second, a disagreement over the "right" of the foreign legations to attend the Ta'ziyah (reenactment of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn) was settled by compromise, but left bad feelings all around.<sup>16</sup> Murray's cultural and religious insensitivity, coupled with his Victorian belief in English superiority, exacerbated the already strained relations with Iran.<sup>17</sup> Faced now with a third dispute,

on June 22, 1855, Murray write to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, stubbornly reiterating his request to place Mīrzā Hashim Khān in Shīrāz. He argued: one, that the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam's rejection was motivated by personal enmity to Mīrzā Hashim Khān; two, that Mīrzā Hashim Khān was marooned at the legation; and three, that one must consider:

...the principle of conceding to the Persian Government the right to question the appointments, the nature of the duties of which are thoroughly British, and for the proper conduct of which the agents are responsible to us alone.<sup>18</sup>

Murray had to wait several months for Clarendon's reply. The British Foreign Secretary's response, which came in November, granted Murray permission to appoint Mīrzā Hashim Khān to the position in Shīrāz.<sup>19</sup> Murray savored this opportunity to oppose the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam officially. He now perceived the crafty Ṣadr-i A'ẓam as Britain's enemy.<sup>20</sup>

The British minister then informed the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam that he intended to appoint Mīrzā Hashim Khān despite Iranian objections.<sup>21</sup> Āqā Khān Nūrī reported the decision to the Shah, who was extremely offended at what he felt was Murray's personal insult.<sup>22</sup> Murray seemed obsessed with the validity of his course, even though in a letter to the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam he admitted what he was doing was illegal:

Whereas it is perfectly well known to your Highness that although, by treaty, Bushire, Tabreez, and Tehran, are the only places in

Persia where British consular agents can reside, the British Mission has for many years entertained agents in Shiraz.<sup>23</sup>

Murray claimed that the Iranians had protected their agents in the past and so therefore had recognized them.<sup>24</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam rejoined that he knew of these agents, but they had always been unofficial and were protected not for being agents but because they were British citizens.<sup>25</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam added that his government was not in a position to pay its employees at the same rate as the British legation and if it let one employee go many others might follow.<sup>26</sup>

The Iranian government was in a very difficult position. Mīrzā Hashim Khān, residing at the British legation, was afraid to return to his family out of fear for his life. The Iranians had no way to remove him except to invade the legation or use his family against him. The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam chose the second alternative.<sup>27</sup> The government ordered Mīrzā Hashim Khān's wife confined to her mother-in-law's house, threatened to divorce her forcibly from her husband, and began spreading rumors about her illicit activities with Murray and Thomson.<sup>28</sup> It was hoped that these actions would force Mīrzā Hashim Khān to leave the legation grounds.<sup>29</sup>

The accusations were not total fabrications as Mīrzā Hashim Khān's wife had a questionable reputation.



Even members of the foreign diplomatic corps in Tehran suspected her of having an affair with William Thomson when he was chargé d'affaires.<sup>30</sup> The Iranians believed this relationship led to Thomson's attempt to appoint her husband to the post in Shīrāz in the first place.<sup>31</sup> There is no substantial evidence that Murray was involved with her. Outraged by the insinuations and insisting upon his innocence, Murray challenged the Iranian government, issuing an ultimatum that if Mīrzā Hashim Khān's wife was not released from house arrest the British Government would break off diplomatic relations.<sup>33</sup> He was acting unilaterally, having never received orders from the Foreign Office to threaten such a step.<sup>34</sup> The personal attack by the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam on his integrity, the continual refusal of the Iranian government to approve Mīrzā Hashim Khān's appointment, and his own shortsighted unwillingness to drop the agent matter placed him in an untenable situation.

When the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam refused to give in to this ultimatum, Murray lowered the legation's flag on November 20, 1855, and handed over authority to his assistant, Mr. Stevens.<sup>35</sup> Murray remained in Tehran at the encouragement of M. Bourée, the French minister, hoping that the Shah would eventually comply with his demand.<sup>36</sup> He was disappointed, however, as the Shah had no such intention. The same day Murray informed a representative from Āqā Khān

Nūrī that if the Iranian government would pay Mīrzā Hashim Khān as much as he would receive as a political agent in Shīraz, the British Government would drop the matter.<sup>37</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam could not allow Britain to dictate the salary of one of its workers. Murray asked the impossible, seemingly in anticipation of a refusal.<sup>38</sup>

On November 29th, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam sent a letter to the British Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, seeking redress and a reprimand for Murray.<sup>39</sup> Stratford forwarded the information to the British Foreign Secretary in London, but for the time being refused to become involved.<sup>40</sup>

Murray left Tehran when he realized that the Shah would not give in to his demands. He traveled to Tabriz, where he continued to correspond with Stevens in Tehran and the British Foreign Secretary. Murray's withdrawal forced the Iranian government to retaliate. In December, the Qajar court distributed a letter to all the remaining foreign legations in Tehran which the Shah had personally written to the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, declaring:

We are, therefore, convinced that this man, Mister Murray is stupid, ignorant, and insane, who has the audacity and impudence to insult even kings! ... We now command you, in order that you may yourself know, and also acquaint the Missions, that until the Queen of England herself makes us a suitable apology for the insolence of her Envoy, we will never receive back this her foolish Minister, who is a simpleton, nor accept from her Government any other Minister.<sup>41</sup>

Murray received a copy of the letter while in Tabrīz and sent it on to London. The wording added to the friction between the two countries, as the British Queen was referred to simply as malikah (queen), without the usual royal titles.<sup>42</sup> Because of the message, both sides became more steadfast in their positions.

#### New Incentives for Dūst Muḥammad Khān

During the conflict over Mīrzā Hashim Khān, intelligence about conditions in Herat and Afghanistan continued to reach the British legation through its newswriter in Mashhad.<sup>43</sup> In late September and early October, news of Muḥammad Yūsif's takeover in Herat arrived along with reports of the death of Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār and the desire of his half brother, Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān, to assume control of his brother's lands.<sup>44</sup> The political instability in Afghanistan caused by these events called for a firm hand at the British legation. Instead, official and unofficial communications between the legation and the Iranian government centered on the Mīrzā Hashim Khān affair.<sup>45</sup>

The danger of Dūst Muḥammad Khān finally fulfilling his lifelong ambition of reuniting the Afghan kingdom was immediately recognized by the Ṣadr-i A'zam. Iranian opposition to such a reunification had been immutable since the breakup of the Durrānī kingdom in 1818. In addition, the

Iranians were bothered by the British reinitiating contact with Dūst Muḥammad Khān in March of 1855, which resulted in a short three-article treaty of "perpetual peace and friendship" after a twelve-year hiatus in relations with Kābul.<sup>46</sup> Britain was trying to shore up relations with the Amīr because of the Crimean War and fear of Russian expansion. The Iranians viewed this action as another attempt to destabilize Khurāsān and to weaken their claim there. They viewed Dūst Muḥammad Khān as their archenemy.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān had numerous incentives for moving on Herat. He had a blood feud to settle with Muḥammad Yūsif, who when taking Herat forcibly married the Amīr's daughter, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān's wife, and mistreated her children, the Amīr's grandchildren.<sup>47</sup> The death of Kuhandil Khān of Qandahār, family revenge, and a desire to reconstitute the Afghan kingdom all pushed Dūst Muḥammad Khān to attempt the capture of Qandahār and the annexation of Herat.

Muḥammad Yūsif in Herat also realized the significance of Kuhandil Khān's death and wrote to the Shah in Tehran and the British agent in Mashhad seeking aid.<sup>48</sup> In his letter, Muḥammad Yūsif inquired why he had not received congratulations from the British when he assumed power. Muḥammad Yūsif then continued: "I entertain the greatest desire of friendship. You must press this in the strongest

possible terms."<sup>49</sup> When Murray received the message, he instructed the agent in Mashhad to assure the Prince of "the sincere satisfaction with which I have learnt of his restoration of the dominion of his ancestors."<sup>50</sup> After this initial exchange, communications stopped because of Murray's departure from Tehran and orders from London.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, Muḥammad Yūsif was also corresponding with the Iranian Governor-General of Khurāsān, Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, when he was forced to deny an accusation made by a former resident of Herat that he was a servant of Great Britain.<sup>52</sup> After denying the accusations, Muḥammad Yūsif stated:

This Servant who now behaves respectfully... needs instructions. Qandahar's affairs are in disarray. Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān's son is in Balkh. All the territories of Herat are now under this servant's control. Those honorable men who have served Herat expect government jobs and honors from the Shah, especially 'Isa' Khān, deputy ruler of Herat.<sup>53</sup>

Contrary to the limited response of Murray, the Iranians continued to correspond with Muḥammad Yūsif, trying to cajole him into their camp.

#### The Iranian Expedition to Stop Dūst Muḥammad Khān

By the end of November, 1856, things could not have been worse for British diplomacy in Iran. Murray had withdrawn; Stevens was still in Tehran but could not deal officially with the Iranian government; Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān

had taken Qandahār; and it seemed in Tehran that his forces would soon move towards Herat Province.<sup>54</sup>

On December 11, the Iranian government received a plea from Muḥammad Yūsif for aid against the threat of an imminent attack by Dūst Muḥammad Khān on Herat.<sup>55</sup> According to Lisān al-Mulk, one of the Qājār court chroniclers, Muḥammad Yūsif and his followers specifically asked that the Shah send his agent Sām Khān Ilkhānī and a force of soldiers to Herat for protection.<sup>56</sup> The day following the request, the Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam held a meeting at his residence about the matter.<sup>57</sup> Four days later the vizir informed the French, Ottoman, and Russian legations that Iran would double its forces in Khurāsān by dispatching five thousand soldiers to Mashhad.<sup>58</sup> The next day two thousand of them departed Tehran.<sup>59</sup> From the swiftness of the Qājār response it is clear that the move had been planned months in advance. After his first appeal to Iran, Muḥammad Yūsif decided there was a chance he could peacefully settle his problems with Dūst Muḥammad Khān. So he asked the Governor of Mashhad to delay for two weeks sending any help.<sup>60</sup>

The dispatch of troops was formally announced in the Tehran Gazette on December 20, 1855.<sup>61</sup> The Shah and the Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam chose Prince Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā once again to command the Herat expedition. At the time of this initial troop dispatch, the Iranians had received a report

that Dūst Muḥammad Khān had stationed a large force of several thousand soldiers on the Herat side of Qandahār.<sup>62</sup> In publicizing the movement of troops the Iranian government announced:

According to the authentic intelligence which has reached the Persian Ministers from Khurasan Dost Moh Khan, the sirdar of Kabul, instigated and assisted by his neighbors (the British) has had the audacity to march an army upon Kandahar and take it; he now meditates the conquest of Herat. The Persian Ministers, for the preservation of order in Khurasan deem it incumbent on them to maintain the integrity of Herat, and not permit any oppression on the part of the Governor of Kabul or Kandahar. The conflict and possession of Herat and the movement of Ameer Dost Moh Khan have been reported in full to the Prime Minister (Sadr-i A'zam). It is assuredly out of the power of Ameer Dost Moh Khan to undertake such an affair in opposition to the will of the Persian Ministers, especially considering the entire obedience always evinced by the Ameer. The ostensible motive (of this movement) is the possession of Herat, but in reality it is to produce confusion and great disorder in the interior of Khurasan, and even in Beluchistan and Kirman.<sup>63</sup>

The announcement went on to say that Iran could not calmly contemplate "so violent a convulsion in its internal affairs" and thus was sending an army to Herat: one, to preserve its institutions; two, to maintain its territorial integrity; and three, to "rescue Herat" from Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>64</sup> Though the Iranian government misrepresented its relationship with Dūst Muḥammad Khān, the opposition to a united Afghanistan was a central pillar of Iranian foreign policy and thus accurately represented the

Iranian position.

The decision by Iran to use military force again in Herat was fraught with difficulties. Iran knew the British Government would object and perhaps use force to stop it. Iran proceeded, evidently hoping the British, who were still involved in the Crimean War, would choose not to interfere. Iran had decided, nevertheless, to fight the British if necessary to pursue its objective. Consequently the Shah sent orders to the governors of the provinces of Fārs, Kirmān, Yazd, Kirmānshāh, and 'Arabistān to be ready for such an eventuality.<sup>65</sup>

With the break in diplomatic relations between Iran and Britain, and the war in the Crimea, the situation seemed to favor Iran. British chargé d'affaires Stevens was still in Tehran sending reports about political affairs, but he was isolated and still unable to communicate directly with the Iranian government.<sup>66</sup>

At the same time, conflicting versions of what was transpiring in Herat were arriving in London. According to reports emanating from the British East India Company, it sounded as if Muḥammad Yūsif had been put in power by a 30,000 man Iranian army.<sup>67</sup> This mythical account had been relayed to the British by Ghulām Haydar Khān, one of Dūst Muḥammad Khān's sons. Considering the political rivalry between the Sadūzays and Bārakzays, there is little doubt



that Dūst Muḥammad Khān wanted to convince the British that the Iranians were already in Herat. Ghulām Haydar Khān was the logical vehicle for such a story: it was his full sister that Muḥammad Yūsif had forcibly married. The Foreign Office sent the information from India to Murray, who quickly wrote a rebuttal. The exchange of correspondence over several months kept London in a confused state. In his dispatch refuting the specious account, Murray wrote:

Up to the present date (February 15, 1856) so far from Herat having been invested by 30,000 Persian soldiers and occupied by 15,000 not one single regiment or even company has passed the Persian Frontier, and those who in writing... designate Prince Mahomed Yoosuf, the present ruler of Herat, as a 'Persian' must have been either grossly ignorant of Afghan affairs and history, or else must have been intended to mislead and deceive the Indian Government.<sup>68</sup>

Murray was correct in his analysis of Muḥammad Yūsif. But Ghulām Haydar Khān had anticipated the fate of Herat. On March 23, 1856, Āqā Khān Nūrī had informed M. Bourée, the French minister, that Iran would seize Herat because Dūst Muḥammad Khan had taken Qandahār.<sup>69</sup> Even when warned by the French of the probable British reaction, the Ṣadr-i A'zam reaffirmed that the Shah had decided to take Herat and could not be dissuaded.<sup>70</sup>

In February of 1856, Sām Khān Ilkhānī entered the city of Herat with an army of several hundred Iranians. The Afghans were not expecting such a large detachment and forced them to move out of the city. The Iranians later

blamed their forced departure on the Dūst Muḥammad Khān faction in Herat.<sup>71</sup> Even Muḥammad Yūsif's Afghan vizir, 'Isa' Khān, feared the Iranian presence and threatened to remove Sām Khān Ilkhānī by force with the help of other Afghan nobles. While the Iranians interpreted this as a pro-Dūst Muḥammad Khān move, it was actually part of the effort to keep Herat independent of both sides.

Soon after the expulsion of Sām Khān Ilkhānī and his large army from Herat, Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, the commander of the Iranian expedition, entered Afghan territory, and together with Sām Khān attacked the Afghan fort of Ghūrīyān.<sup>72</sup> An attack on Ghūrīyān had preceded every attempt by Qājār Iran to take Herat. This time, however, the Iranians carried out their attack at the end of winter, when provisions were low, to prevent stockpiling of supplies. The Iranians obviously had learned from their unsuccessful attempts at capturing Herat Province. This time, at least, the defenders of Herat would not be able to rely on the harvest to supplement their stores as they had on previous sieges.

Muḥammad Yūsif, realizing the logistical difficulties and the possibility of capture, attempted to bargain with the Iranians. He made plans to arrest those who opposed the entry of Sām Khān's forces into Herat, and then to allow Sām Khān back inside the city.<sup>73</sup> He refused help

from a group of Jamshidis and Hazarahs who had come to Herat to protect him from the Iranians. His desire to compromise with the Iranians alienated many of those who had supported his takeover of Herat.<sup>74</sup> Muḥammad Yūsif's position was further compromised by the fact that Dūst Muḥammad Khān's forces had reportedly defeated an army he sent to guard the town of Farāh, 160 miles southeast of the capital.<sup>75</sup> As a result, Farāh had fallen into Bārakzay hands.

The Sadūzay ruler was caught in the middle. Unlike his predecessor, Sayyid Muḥammad Khān, he issued coinage anonymously instead of in the name of the Shah.<sup>76</sup> He had also refused to provide soldiers for the army of Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā and at the same time declared that Herat was a "protectorate" of Iran.<sup>77</sup> Muḥammad Yūsif's technique was to promise much but deliver as little as possible. These affronts to Iranian sovereignty indicated his true feelings toward Iran. By coming to terms with the Iranians, he might save his position, but he would lose support among the majority of the Afghans of Herat. Like his predecessor, he would then owe his throne to Iran because he lacked internal Afghan support. Muḥammad Yūsif and his vizir, 'Isa' Khān, had reportedly attempted to work out an agreement with his Barakzay competitor, Dūst Muḥammad Khān, for aid against Iran. But the Amīr, busy consolidating his

position in Qandahār, was having trouble in his own capital, and given his animosity towards Sadūzays, he was either unable or unwilling to help.<sup>78</sup>

#### 'Isa' Khān's Tenure in Herat

At this critical time, in late April, 'Isa' Khān decided to take over Herat, offering to turn over his ruler Muḥammad Yūsif to Prince Murād Mīrzā in exchange for the withdrawal of the Iranian forces from the city.<sup>79</sup> The British chargé d'affaires in Tehran, Stevens, later acquired copies of the correspondence between 'Isa' Khān and the Prince.<sup>80</sup> The letters reveal that the Qājār prince had guaranteed 'Isa' Khān and his heirs the "entire sovereignty of the capital of Herat and its dependencies" in exchange for Muḥammad Yūsif and a pledge of loyalty to the Shah.<sup>81</sup> Sām Khān Ilkhānī conducted the negotiations for Iran, pledging in a separate letter that Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā would also withdraw his forces. The agreements were sworn to on the holy Qur'an.<sup>82</sup>

'Isa' Khān later wrote that at the time the Iranians thought him incapable of delivering his end of the bargain and so were willing to make a promise they felt they would not have to keep.<sup>83</sup> 'Isa' Khān succeeded in capturing Muḥammad Khān, and on April 29 sent him to the Iranian camp.<sup>84</sup> But instead of withdrawing his army, Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā moved it closer to Herat, claiming that 'Isa' Khān was

in league with Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>85</sup> The Qājār prince then demanded that his force be allowed to enter the walled city.<sup>86</sup> At this juncture, 'Isa' Khān, in an act of desperation, gathered his men in the citadel and hoisted the British flag. He then dispatched copies of the agreement with Prince Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā and Sām Khān to his agent in Tehran to present to the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam.<sup>87</sup> In the letter to his agent, he wrote of his predicament:

The people lost all confidence in the Persian authorities, seeing how little disposed Sooltan Moorad Mirza is to act up to his engagements. We have determined to make a stand in the citadel, you know how I have labored for the just cause, consoled the timid, given money to the wavering, seized and displaced the rebellious, yet my services, remain unacknowledged. I am reproached for disobedience and insolence, but the true cause of our resistance arises from our having lost all hope and in our desperation we can look for security to life and honor in the citadel alone, where we have taken refuge and there we make our stand.<sup>88</sup>

'Isa' Khān's envoy presented copies of the engagements with the prince to the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam. In June, Āqā Khān Nūrī replied, rejecting 'Isa' Khān's complaints:

After mature deliberation or a careful perusal of the nawab's documents, it will be perfectly clear to you that no infringement of the compact has been perpetrated by him for this basis; all his writings rest upon orders and prohibitions emanating from this government.<sup>89</sup>

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam based his argument on the fact that in the official agreement no mention was made about the withdrawal of troops and the separate letter from Sām Khān Ilkhānī had

had no official sanction.<sup>90</sup> The transaction was a ruse by Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā to detain Muḥammad Yūsif and further divide the Afghans. The Ṣadr-i A'zam was more than content to participate. His reply to 'Isa' Khān reiterated that both Khurāsān and Herat were "Persian soil and thus no different from the rest of Iran."<sup>91</sup>

Unaware of this reply from the Ṣadr-i A'zam, 'Isa' Khān attempted to find an ally in the British. Writing to Murray, he pledged:

I, your slave, swear by God, who has no equal, and by all the sacred writings which have been handed down by his prophets (on whom be peace) I wazeer Essau Khan, in whose sole possession is the whole of Herat, the city and environs, the autocrat of the kingdom who admits no colleague or partner in my gov't, I of my own free will and pleasure in all truth and sincerity hereby give to the glorious powerful British Gov't the whole country, Herat, its city, its people, its soldiers. I do hereby agree to serve the state so long as I shall live. I with the whole of my family and tribe for all generations will be devoted to its service. I will never act in opposition.<sup>92</sup>

He also wrote to the British Government in India, asking for military aid. In offering to turn Herat over to the British army, 'Isa' Khān hoped he would be relieving Herat. Both London and Calcutta rebuffed his first appeals as the British feared aiding him would alienate Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>93</sup> The British wanted Herat independent, but did not want to align themselves with its ruler. So while the British pondered what policy to follow, Herat faced both

Iranian and Afghan opponents,<sup>94</sup>

The monarchy of Iran reportedly still hoped the British would not intervene to lift its siege of Herat. In recent years, the Iranians had attempted to develop new ties with France, hoping for its help in restraining Great Britain. Murray, who was now in Baghdād, informed Clarendon that the Shah of Iran had vowed: "I will take Herat if it costs me my crown, and as for the English, France will not allow them to go to war with me."<sup>95</sup> While Murray's information was second hand, it was indicative of the policy followed by the Iranians to ward off the British and that of the French to thwart British interests when ever possible.

According to British Consul Stevens, the Ṣadr-i A'zam also helped 'Isa' Khān's envoy contact the Russian minister to Iran, Mr. Anitchkov. The envoy wanted to deliver a letter he carried from 'Isa' Khān, but Anitchkov refused to accept the note or to meet with the envoy. He reportedly did not want to be involved with the "chiefs" of Herat or to become embroiled in the Herat affair.<sup>96</sup> He further declared that his government had instructed him earlier to express to the Shah and Ṣadr-i A'zam its "dissatisfaction" with the expedition to Herat. He emphasized it would only worsen Anglo-Iranian relations and be detrimental to Iran.<sup>97</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'zam's motives for encour-

aging 'Isa' Khān's efforts to meet the Russian minister appeared to be to force 'Isa' Khān's envoy to recognize the tenuous and basically unsupportable position of his ruler in Herat.

At the same time, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam was willing to negotiate about Herat. He had written the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Lord Stratford, that Iran had no other intention in sending troops to Khurāsān than "to maintain order and tranquility in the exterior and interior of the Province of Khurāsān."<sup>98</sup> He added that Iran "would recall its troops from Herat if Dost Mohamed Khan withdrew from Kandahar, turned it over to the sons of Kohandil Khan, and promised not to interfere in its affairs."<sup>99</sup> But while the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam sought a political settlement, he also pushed for an Iranian military victory at Herat.

#### The Iranian Siege of Herat

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam pressed the commander of the Shah's army outside of Herat to take the city. Iranian forces had captured numerous other towns and villages in the province, including Ghūrīyān, Farāh, and Isfazar (Sabzayār).<sup>100</sup> Herat was the last and most important city left in Afghan hands. But the Afghans continued to hold out. In mid-August, 'Isa' Khān again wrote to Murray pleading for aid. He described the Iranian army's assault on Herat and the valor of the Afghan resistance:



...(All) the time that the Persian Army have raised their standard for the subjugation of this country, and have set their affections upon the capture and retention of this town and kingdom and have done their utmost in the way of destruction, murder, pillage, plunder, and robbery, throughout the principality... (A) hostile answer (has) been given with the tongue of the sword and the mouth of the musket.<sup>101</sup>

'Isa' Khān was hard-pressed to secure enough food and supplies. The Iranian army blocked all of the main roads leading into the city and had set up walled entrenchments in front of each of the five main entrances.<sup>102</sup>

Though some provisions were still getting through, there was not enough to sustain the population during a siege. 'Isa' Khān now sent an urgent message to the British asking that an envoy be sent to Herat. Again the entreaty was rejected.<sup>103</sup> Thus he had no recourse but to rely solely on local allies, including the Sunnī Jamshīdī tribe under its chief 'Abd'allāh Khān, and other minor tribal chiefs. They rendered aid by raiding supply caravans coming from Mashhad and helping bring supplies into Herat.<sup>104</sup>

The Iranian army facing Herat consisted of approximately 24,000 men in fourteen battalions of a thousand men each, with the remainder being "match lockmen and irregular cavalry."<sup>105</sup> The army's 26 small cannons had little effect on the city as most of the balls stuck in Herat's mud walls.<sup>106</sup> The besieging army received supplies from villages around Herat and met at least its min-

imum needs. Additional supplies sent from Mashhad increased its ability to maintain the attack.

Though criticized by European mercenaries in its ranks, the Iranian army at Herat was in a much better position than similar Qājār armies sent there in the past. The timing of the siege prevented the Herati ruler from gathering in the harvest and following a scorched earth policy as Yār Muḥammad Khān and Kāmṛān Shāh had done in 1836.<sup>107</sup>

Sultān Murād Mīrzā's decision to blockade all the main gates of the city and to starve out the Afghans further increased the chances for an eventual Iranian victory. Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh encouraged Sultān Murād Mīrzā's tenacity by reportedly threatening the prince not only with "the fate of a state criminal" if he did not occupy Herat in a given period of time, but also with personal responsibility for paying back all expenditures if the siege failed.<sup>108</sup>

Though the Iranians were better organized than during their last siege, they still had to contend not only with Turkmen and Jāmshīdī raiding parties which ambushed their munitions and food caravans from Mashhad, but also with their own ineptitude. In late May, 1856, the main ammunition supply of the besiegers blew up accidentally, killing over three hundred men.<sup>109</sup> About 1,500 Iranian

soldiers had reportedly been killed in the siege, and many more hundred injured.<sup>110</sup>

The Afghans also lost 1,500 men, but 'Isā Khān promised to hold out "until the last dog in the town was consumed."<sup>111</sup> Nonetheless, he knew that he faced impossible odds unless he found additional allies. In Tehran, British chargé d'affaires Stevens heard from his agent in Mashhad that the Iranian vizir of Khurāsān, Mīrzā Muḥammad, had gone to Herat to meet with 'Isā Khān. Upon his return, he informed the Iranian government that Herat would soon surrender.<sup>112</sup>

#### The British Demands

Unknown to Iran, by the middle of August the British Government had decided to send an invasion force to the Persian Gulf to compel the Iranians to withdraw from Herat. In a dispatch dated September 22, 1856, Foreign Secretary Clarendon instructed Stevens to leave Iran, admonishing him not to inform the Iranians of British intentions.<sup>113</sup> The Ṣadr-i A'zam realized that something was afoot and ordered the illegal British political agent in the town of Astar'ābād to leave Iran.<sup>114</sup> He also sent Farrukh Khān, Amīn al-Mulk, one of the Qājār court's most competent diplomats, to Paris as the new Iranian Ambassador with the power to negotiate a settlement with Great Britain.

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam instructed Farrukh Khān first to proceed to Constantinople to try to come to an agreement with the British.<sup>115</sup> He authorized him to state that Iran would give up control of Herat if it was captured, in exchange for specific guarantees by the British on other outstanding issues between the two countries. Farrukh Khān was not to submit unless the British recognized Iran's "right to punish" those who interfered in Herat, and pledged not "to interfere in or invade Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and Sistan."<sup>116</sup>

Āqā Khān Nūrī felt that Britain had no business interfering in Heratī affairs. First of all, it was against the terms of the Anglo-Iranian Definitive Treaty of 1814; and secondly, the 1853 "agreement" had never been ratified by the British Government nor had the ratified documents been exchanged.<sup>117</sup> And third, according to the Iranians, Mr. Thomson had interfered in the internal affairs of Herat by sending three hundred tomans to Sayyid Muḥammad Khān which would nullify the agreement even if it had been ratified. Farrukh Khān had to convince the English to force Dūst Muḥammad Khān back to Kābul, and return Qandahār to the family of Kuhandil Khān.<sup>118</sup> Herat was to be turned over to a "worthy Afghan grandee".<sup>119</sup>

What Iran was seeking was a return to the status quo of 1855. The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam wanted Farrukh Khān to ask

the British representative in Constantinople whether they "would agree or not if the Government of Iran established diplomatic relations...and signed a treaty with one of the Rajas of Hindustan."<sup>120</sup> The parallel to the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam was clear. The eastern Iranian highlands were solely an Iranian sphere of influence just as the territory controlled by the rajas was part of the British sphere.<sup>121</sup> He believed that neither the Iranians nor the British should interfere in the other's sphere.

Farrukh Khān arrived in Constantinople only to be met with a series of six demands that the British Foreign Secretary had dictated to the British Ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.<sup>122</sup> The Foreign Secretary instructed Lord Stratford to accept nothing less than all the terms. No formal negotiations took place, only discussions over the ultimatum and Farrukh Khān's powers.<sup>125</sup> The acceptance of the ultimatum would have given Britain not only the same rights as Russia in Iran, but would also have created a de facto limited British control of Iranian foreign policy.

The British wanted: one, a new commercial treaty; two, the removal of the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam; three, all debts to British citizens paid; four, an agreement satisfactory to the Imam of Muscat about leasing Bandar 'Abbās; five, Iran's payment of compensation to Herat for damages; and six, that Iran recognize the absolute independence of Herat and with-

draw its troops.<sup>124</sup> These demands were unacceptable to Farrukh Khān because although he had been authorized to agree to the removal of the army from Herat in exchange for a settlement, he had no authority to agree to other conditions.<sup>125</sup> A deadlock resulted. The British Prime Minister wanted to force Iran to accept all or nothing and would use the Herat issue as a means to obtain other desired political ends. Murray had been a supporter of just such an approach months before.<sup>126</sup>

#### The Occupation of Herat

Meanwhile, conditions for the Afghans at Herat continued to worsen. The head of the Iranian "engineering corps" at the siege, a French mercenary named Captain Buhler, reported in mid-September that the mining of Herat's walls was progressing and he expected that in ten days they could be penetrated.<sup>127</sup> By late September, the Shah's army gained access when some of the Herati Shī'ahs who sympathized with the Iranians opened one of the city's gates for them. The Afghans found out about the conspiracy and were ready.<sup>128</sup> They killed over 250 Iranians who entered and severed their heads.<sup>129</sup> Since the conspirators were Shī'ahs, 'Isā Khān reportedly ordered the "indiscriminate massacre of the Shī'ah residents known or suspected of having shared in the conspiracy."<sup>130</sup> 'Isā Khān's action

further divided the Heratis and diminished their willingness to hold out against the Iranians.

The Afghan defenders of Herat enjoyed some short-term successes even though their position worsened. But the Iranians continued to gain ground, and were further encouraged when they were able to intercept a last minute plea for help from 'Isā Khān to his rival, Dūst Muḥammad Khān. In the letter, 'Isā Khān told Dūst Muḥammad Khān that he had only a month's supply left.<sup>131</sup> While this particular letter was confiscated, others reached their destination. If forced to choose between Shī'ah Iranian or Sunni Afghan domination, 'Isā Khān, like most of the other Pushtun rulers of Herat favored his fellow Afghans. In fact, in an earlier letter to Dūst Muḥammad Khān, 'Isā Khān was supposed to have declared: "The Afghans as good Sunnīs, would never submit to the supremacy of the Persian Shī'ah."<sup>132</sup>

Though 'Isā Khān had no way of knowing, his request of mid-September had finally brought results. The Governor-General of India, Charles Canning, had decided to send him 200,000 Indian rupees to help defend Herat from the Iranians, but arranging its delivery caused a fatal delay.<sup>133</sup>

The possibility of the Iranian siege succeeding increased Āqā Khān Nūrī's optimism. But a few members of the Iranian government cautioned the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam. Shujā'

al-Mulk, the vizir of the Province of Shīrāz and nephew of the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, sounded a sober note while writing to request reinforcements in the Persian Gulf area, where he figured any British response would take place:

More troops are necessary. All I formerly represented (in this respect) you would not believe and thought I was activated by some improper motive. To wage war with the English is no child's play...If God prevent anything goes wrong our faces will be blackened and the world will attribute it to our negligence or ignorance.<sup>134</sup>

The Iranian consul at Bombay knew of the British intent to send a contingent to the Persian Gulf, and on September 18 so informed the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam in a dispatch, which arrived in Tehran during the second week of October.<sup>135</sup> With this information, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam could have withdrawn the siege. He decided instead to use an occupied Herat as a bargaining tool to force the British to guarantee that Dūst Muḥammad Khān would not annex the province. The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam attempted to contact chargé d'affaires Stevens, but though he was still in Tehran, he refused to accept an official message from Āqā Khān Nūrī because Clarendon had previously told him to refrain from all communications with the Iranians and proceed to Baghdād.<sup>136</sup>

On the 30th of September, the Iranians brought Prince Muḥammad Yūsif to Tehran as a prisoner. They threw him into a prison referred to as anbar (manure), which was reserved for those accused of the worst crimes. Placing



Muḥammad Yūsif in such a place was a gross insult to the last claimant to the throne of Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī.<sup>137</sup>

Later the Shah moved Muḥammad Yūsif to a prison reserved for political offenders. On October 5th the luckless Sadūzay was brought before the Shah with a rope around his neck. He was told that while he deserved death he would be spared, and was returned to his cell.<sup>138</sup>

The Tehran Gazette on the 16th of October published a report mentioning the late September arrival at Bū'shahr of a British ship, and also the news of preparations in Bombay for an expedition to the Persian Gulf.<sup>139</sup> But as a mouthpiece of the Shah, the article went on to say:

What the editor knows as certain, is that the Ministers (sic--leaders) of the Persian Government have too much confidence in the old friendship between the two Governments, and rely too much upon the good faith of the British to believe that a hostile step has been taken.<sup>140</sup>

The article closed with the following admonition:

If it is ascertained that the English Government acting on the instigations of others, the reports of their employees or from interested motives (landed at Bū'shahr) then the religious and other subjects of Persia who are endowed with the faith of Islam and with zeal, will with the greatest regret be obliged to oppose such intentions relying upon God in the defence of the honor of their government, the honor of their families and their glorious religion.<sup>141</sup>

On November 1, 1856, the British East India Company, on orders from Lord Clarendon, declared war on Iran (see Appendix III). Unknown to both the Iranian and British gov-

ernments was the fact that on October 26th, Herat had succumbed to the Iranian army. The news did not reach Tehran for eight days.<sup>142</sup> The Shah's army had finally broken through the outer walls of Herat and was in a position to take the citadel. After receiving a pledge of protection for his family, his property, and his life, 'Isa' Khān and his supporters decided to surrender.<sup>143</sup> The Afghan defenders turned over the citadel to the Iranian army, and the Iranians took 'Isa' Khān and his supporters to the royal camp.<sup>144</sup> The lack of supplies, arms, and outside support forced 'Isa' Khān to capitulate. Herat was in Iranian hands for the first time since Nādir Shāh Afshār took the city over a hundred years earlier. The Iranians did not keep their word to spare 'Isa' Khān. On orders reportedly direct from the Shah he was put to death.<sup>145</sup>

According to the French charge d'affaires in Tehran, Comte de Gobineau, the Shah was greatly elated at his army's success:

The news of the fall of Herat has arrived here, confirmed by three successive couriers; the joy of the king has been all the more lively because he attached a great importance in having succeeded in an enterprise in which Muhammad Shah his father had failed.<sup>146</sup>

The Shah then ordered rejoicing to take place all over Iran to celebrate the auspicious event.<sup>147</sup>

While the Iranians consolidated their hold on Herat, the British launched their attack in the Persian

Gulf. Farrukh Khān, in Constantinople, upon learning of the British declaration of war, broke off talks with Lord Stratford and proceeded to Paris.<sup>148</sup> He hoped to work out a more amicable agreement there. A month later in Paris he set up communication with Lord Cowley, the British Ambassador to the Court of Napoleon III. In the interim there was no possibility for negotiations.<sup>149</sup>

On his way to Paris, Farrukh Khān apparently received further instructions which Āqā Khān Nūrī had sent from Tehran on December 19th. In his dispatch, the Šadr-i A'zam complained of the duplicity of the British, who had offered to talk to Farrukh Khān in Constantinople at the same time they were preparing for war.<sup>150</sup> He told Farrukh Khān that the English were trying to sow sedition in Iran:

...But they are unaware of the fact that duplicity is the worse of follies...with the help of the Almighty Allah and the victory-prone fortune of his imperial majesty, victory is the lot of Islam by virtue of the unsullied Shari'at, and the sedition will be forsaken and defeated.<sup>151</sup>

Āqā Khān Nūrī had given Farrukh Khān full powers to settle the matter with the British as long as the conditions requested in his earlier correspondence were met, but cautioned him:

You won't, of course, forget the damages to this lofty state. During the reign of the deceased king, alas what damages we suffered, and in this victorious period what damages we incurred in the expedition to conquer Herat and what numbers were killed.<sup>152</sup>

Āqā Khān Nūrī was also worried that the British would not honor any treaty that was negotiated. He remembered that after the death in 1839 of Ranjit Singh and the ten years of chaos that followed, the British occupied the Panjab and annexed all of the Sikh state. He told his envoy: "You will see to it that the treaty you conclude with them concerning Afghanistan will not be like Ranjit Singh's. God willing, it will be forever fully endurable and viable."<sup>153</sup> Clearly, Āqā Khān Nūrī viewed Britain as an untrustworthy, alien power interfering in a regional conflict in which they had no place. But British military power, not historical claims would determine the matter. Foreign Secretary Clarendon was determined to break the opposition of those he viewed as rebellious "pawns" on his chessboard.

#### War in the Persian Gulf

Since affairs in India in 1856 were still under the control of the British East India Company, Lord Palmerston ordered Lord Canning, Governor-General of India, to launch an expedition to Iran. The Prime Minister had decided it would be better for the East India Company to declare war than to reconvene Parliament.<sup>154</sup> He realized that getting parliamentary approval was doubtful so soon after the war in the Crimea, which had ended early that spring. It was unlikely the public would be in favor of another costly war

far from the British homeland.

Lord Palmerston selected Sir James Outram to command the expedition. At the time, Outram was in England, recovering from a sickness contracted in India, and was thought to be dying.<sup>155</sup> When offered the appointment as commander of the expedition, he regained his spirit and seemingly his health almost instantaneously. As he could not be in India for the beginning of the operation, the command was given temporarily to General Foster Stalker to take the island of Kharg in the Persian Gulf and also the port of Bu'shahr. The British expedition was composed of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and two companies of sappers--a combined force of over 5,720 men.<sup>156</sup> They left Bombay harbor and on November 13, 1856, took Khārg, which the Iranians had evacuated weeks before.

The British Government and especially Lord Palmerston thought that Iran would surrender after losing Bū'shahr and Khārg. They mistakenly believed that it was their occupation of Khārg in the 1838 conflict that had caused the Iranians to pull back from Herat. The Shah reacted to the occupation of Khārg and Bū'shahr by calling for a holy war against the British.<sup>157</sup> His announcement elicited little response. A cholera epidemic in Tehran had reportedly killed about 20,000 of the estimated 60,000 inhabitants and famine in the northern Province of Tabrīz

was taking a heavy toll.<sup>158</sup> A successful jihad was further inhibited by the Shah's tenuous relationship with the 'ulamā, who were less than enthusiastic about supporting him. His veneration of a picture of the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law 'Alī brought accusations of idol worship from the Shī'ah 'ulamā.<sup>159</sup>

Bū'shahr had been indefensible. One of the army commanders there had commented: "We have neither an army which deserves the name nor the permission of the government to wage war."<sup>160</sup> The Shah, in response to the defeats in the Gulf, named Shujā' al-Mulk, who had earlier warned the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam about fighting the British, as head of the Iranian forces. He marched towards the Gulf, but he was not ready to engage his adversary until the end of January, 1857. When the British realized that the Iranians were not going to surrender, they decided to attack the town of Muḥammarah, on the Shatt al-'Arab. Little happened as the British waited for Commander Outram and his reinforcements of over 4,500 men to move on Muḥammarah.

During January of 1857, Shujā' al-Mulk had time to form a camp at Burāzjān, about 46 miles northeast of Bū'shahr, with about 7,000 troops and eighteen guns.<sup>161</sup> He was able to muster men from the Qashqay tribe, the regular army, and from the Arab detachment under the command of Riẓā Qulī Khān. General Outram finally arrived at Bū'shahr

to join his troops on January 27, 1857, and within four days marched off to meet Shujā' al-Mulk. When the Iranians learned of the British advance, they withdrew suddenly, without engaging them. In their haste, the Iranian army left behind a large ammunition dump, which the British destroyed. Shujā' al-Mulk hoped to surprise the British by an ambush in the passes near the fortress of Burāzjān, but that did not happen since Outram's officers convinced him not to pursue the Iranians into the mountains. Their spies had informed them of the Iranian plans.<sup>162</sup>

Besides preparing to fight the British in the field, the Iranian government attempted to launch a news campaign to tell their side of the conflict to other countries. Iran printed a pamphlet describing its position, in which again the Afghans were called an "evil-disposed and marauding people". Iran defended its occupation of Herat as a move to thwart Dūst Muḥammad Khān's desire to take the province.<sup>163</sup> In an article in the Tehran Gazette of December 25th the Iranian government defended the siege:

Essau Khan himself and his followers had become obstacles to the independence of the Goy't of Herat, and that is to say they had themselves invited Dost Muhammad Khan to Herat intending to deliver the place over to him and under the circumstances the Persian Ministers had a clear right to remove Essau Khan and his partners to prevent Herat from falling ever under other hands and to preserve its independence. Now it has become known from the letters of Dost Muhammad Khan and his son Ghulum Hyder

Khan that they distinctly enticed the Heratees to hold out because British troops had come from Peshawar to Cabul and muskets, money, and ammunition had arrived at Peshawar from Shikarpore.<sup>164</sup>

The Iranians must have been referring to the money which the British had sent to Kābul and Qandahār for unspecified purposes. The article indicated that the Iranians had heard of aid in money and arms that the British planned to give Dūst Muḥammad Khān. The actual negotiations for the money and arms did not take place until the following month.<sup>165</sup>

On January 26, 1857, Dūst Muḥammad Khān and a representative from the East India Company signed a treaty providing 100,000 India rupees (about 10,000) per month to the Amīr in exchange for his making war on Iran. The British had already provided Dūst Muḥammad Khān with half a million rupees to maintain his forces. The additional subsidy was to be maintained for the duration of the war. As part of the alliance, Dūst Muḥammad Khān agreed to allow the British to send military officers "with suitable native establishments and orderlies" wherever an Afghan army was assembled to act against the Iranians, to ascertain whether the money was being spent for the specified purposes.<sup>166</sup>

Dūst Muḥammad Khān's subsidy lasted only two months. The Iranian forces were no match for the British, who were already in place in the Persian Gulf. On February 8, the so-called Battle of Khushāb took place, twelve miles west



of the fortress of Burāzjān. General Outram declared it a great victory, for the British cavalry had broken up an Iranian infantry square--virtually an unheard of feat in the mid-nineteenth century. General Outram recalled the battle six months after the event:

One of the very best of the Persian regular army, that the soldiers composing it were fine, tall, strong, athletic men, from northern Persia; that they were formed in square in the most approved, regular manner--four deep, with two ranks kneeling; that they stood perfectly firm and steady until the cavalry sprang into their ranks.<sup>167</sup>

The British general probably exaggerated his cavalry's accomplishment of breaking an infantry square. One of the British officers who took part in the battle, Lt. Ballard, claimed that it was the "terrible fire of our eighteen guns rather than the cavalry charge which disorganized them."<sup>168</sup>

The Iranian countered by claiming that they had not prepared for battle and did not expect to engage the enemy.

This was supported by the fact that the forces of the Ilkhani, the local tribal chief, were a full mile from the other contingents of the Iranian army and the scene of battle. The Battle of Khushāb was very brief, as the Iranians almost immediately pulled back. Seven hundred Iranians were slain there, and according to the British, fewer than twenty of their own men were killed.<sup>169</sup>

The British army chose not to pursue the Iranians, deciding to return to Bū'shahr. On their way back the

troops suffered severely from drizzling rain, deep mud, and very cold conditions. Iranians in local villages, seeing the retreat of the British in the mud, concluded that the Shah's army had won the day, and reduced their trade with them.<sup>170</sup> This hampered the British operations, forcing them to bring in supplies from Ottoman Iraq.

Shujā' al-Mulk, commander of the Iranian forces, reported their defeat at Burāzjān to the Shah and asked for more supplies. Instead of granting his request, the Commander-in-Chief of the Shah's army, Mīrzā Muḥammad Khān Qājār, relieved him of his command.<sup>171</sup> Within twelve days peace was negotiated in Paris by Farrukh Khān, but neither combatant in the Persian Gulf knew of it. The Iranians, under Mīrzā Muḥammad Khān Qājār, regrouped at Nanīzak and tried to disrupt the British by harassing them. The British, preparing an attack on the port of Muḥammarah, chose not to respond to the challenges.

#### The 1857 Treaty of Paris

Farrukh Khān arrived in Paris towards the end of January to negotiate with the British Ambassador to France, Lord Cowley. Cowley's superior, Lord Palmerston, had decided it would be better for Farrukh Khān to stay in France to prevent problems in Parliament.<sup>172</sup> When Parliament convened February 3, 1857, members including the Earl of Derby and Earl Grey voiced their opposition to the war

in Iran.<sup>173</sup> Many others also criticized the government.

Palmerston sent Lord Cowley a tentative peace agreement to give to Farrukh Khān. On February 4, Cowley presented the Qājār diplomat with the proposed agreement containing the following demands: the removal of the Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam; Iranian recognition of Herat's independence; an Iranian promise not to invade Herat's territory; payment of a war indemnity to Herat; and permission for Britain to station consuls in every city of Iran. Farrukh Khān insisted that Britain promise to prevent the future unification of Herat with Afghanistan.<sup>174</sup> Farrukh Khān met on several occasions with the French Foreign Minister, Count Walewski, who encouraged him to harden his opposition to the British demands. Napoleon III also met with the Iranian several times concerning the peace terms. The British did not like the interference and demanded that the French support the British position.<sup>175</sup>

It is important to note, however, that the circumstances which kept Farrukh Khān adamant in his objection to the British demands were the instructions from Nasir al-Din Shah and the difficult time Prime Minister Palmerston was having with the British Parliament. Lord John Russell, Sir Henry Layar, and William Gladstone had all attacked Lord Palmerston's position.<sup>176</sup> The Russian Ambassador to France even became entangled in the negotiations by stating that

Russia could not support English demands for placing consuls in all the cities in Iran. He went so far as to suggest that Russia and Britain agree to divide the country into spheres of interest, with the Russians placing their consuls in the north and the British placing theirs in the south.<sup>177</sup> The British rejected this idea, but a similar agreement was reached in the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.

Farrukh Khān's tenacity and the criticism in Parliament forced the British to compromise on several issues. They settled for "favored nation" status, whereby their consuls would be placed only where the Russians had theirs. They did not insist on the removal of the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, and gave up the right to intervene in the affairs of any subject of Iran except those specifically in their employ. Lord Cowley agreed that Iran would not be required to pay an indemnity to Herat, and contingent on the evacuation of Herat, the island of Khārg and all places along the Persian Gulf would be returned (see Appendix IV).<sup>178</sup> Farrukh Khān also had convinced the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, to write a separate note about how the situation in Herat would be as it was before the invasion, thus maintaining the status quo. This note, which Farrukh Khān received two weeks after the signing of the treaty, left the definition of status quo open to individual interpretation.<sup>179</sup>

The British, for their part, forced the Iranians to recognize Herat and the rest of Afghanistan as totally independent states and to pledge not to invade Herat unless attacked by it.<sup>180</sup> The two sides worked out other compromises in regard to payment of debts due British subjects in Iran, the slave trade, and commercial rights.<sup>181</sup>

On March 4, 1857, Lord Cowley and Farrukh Khān initialed the Treaty of Paris. British historians have emphasized the fact that by not demanding territorial concessions or an indemnity, Britain had acted benevolently. The British actually exacted a great deal from Iran, having forced the Iranians to renounce their right to Herat, which had always been considered part of their empire. This was a great psychological loss for the ruler of the Qājār dynasty, but Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh was in no position to argue.

On March 7th, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, wrote Murray of the peace:

I send you the treaty which Cowley has signed after immense trouble with Ferook Khan. You will perhaps not like it or think that we have been severe enough on Persia, but I can assure you that in the present temper of the Parlt and the people of England, we may esteem ourselves most happy to have made peace, because we could not have continued the war.<sup>182</sup>

Palmerston himself stated that Britain had agreed to compromise out of necessity. He was greatly troubled by the reaction in Parliament, which he feared would put an end to the war.<sup>183</sup>

War continued in the Persian Gulf even though the diplomats had worked out the terms for peace. On March 26, 1857, General Outram attacked the small mud-walled town of Muḥammarah, which was defended by 6,000 Iranians. A naval bombardment began that battle. After constant bombardment from sixty-eight pound shot from the large cannons on the troop ships, the defenders gave up hope. The British killed more than three hundred Iranians in the engagement, forcing the Iranian army to retreat. The British lost only ten men.<sup>184</sup> Not long after this battle, the Iranian commander informed the British of the conclusion of the peace in Paris. General Outram and his troops were understandably disappointed. Having come for booty and riches, they captured not a single Persian carpet.<sup>185</sup>

Now the Anglo-Persian war was over in the Persian Gulf as well as on paper. There is no doubt that the Iranians would have reannexed Herat to Iran if the British had not intervened. The Mīrzā Hashim Khān affair had a significant effect on the relations between the two countries. The rupture of diplomatic relations encouraged the Iranians to take the initiative in Herat, gave Great Britain part of its casus belli against Iran, and limited Muḥammad Yūsif's chance of obtaining British diplomatic and military assistance. As for Mīrzā Hashim Khān, he was reconciled with his family before the war began, and had

returned to his government post.<sup>186</sup> The Treaty of Paris technically guaranteed the creation of a permanent buffer zone between Iran and India. The Şadr-i A'zam, however, did not view the treaty as final. He thought that what was lost on the battlefield might be redeemed through political and diplomatic skill.

#### A New Ruler in Herat

After the takeover of Herat and 'Isá Khān's execution, only Muḥammad Yūsif, the former ruler of Herat, now in Tehran, remained as one who might oppose attempts by Iran to maintain control. Consequently the Şadr-i A'zam turned Muḥammad Yūsif over to relatives of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān, who had accused him of killing the ex-ruler and who demanded his life in return.<sup>187</sup> The Şadr-i A'zam agreed to his execution probably because at the time he knew that under the terms of the Treaty of Paris he would have to send the Sadūzay back to Herat. When the British protested his execution, the Iranians claimed it had been done before they learned the terms of the treaty. Evidence indicates that a private courier from Farrukh Khān had reached Tehran in time for the Şadr-i A'zam to act before the official announcement arrived.<sup>188</sup>

The Şadr-i A'zam had his own candidate to rule Herat. He was Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān Bārakzay, an out-of-favor nephew of Dūst Muḥammad Khān, who in exchange for being

appointed Governor of Herat, gave a written loyalty oath to the Shah, and promised to say the khutbah and to coin money in the Shah's name--both signs of tutelage.<sup>189</sup> Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān left Tehran two days after Muḥammad Yūsif was executed. He later admitted that when he signed the agreement with Āqā Khān Nūrī he did not know that the terms of the Treaty of Paris made Herat independent.<sup>190</sup> The official exchange of the ratified treaty document took place in Baghdād on May 2, 1857. Thus by the time the exchange of ratification took place, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam had already installed the new governor, who had submitted to the Shah.<sup>191</sup>

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam's actions suggest that Iran still intended to prevail in Herat. When Lord Palmerston learned that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān had taken over in Herat with the Shah's support, he was powerless to do anything about it. The Foreign Office instructed Murray to deal with whomever was in control, thus ignoring the fact that the Iranians had broken the treaty even before it was completely implemented.<sup>192</sup> In Palmerston's view the important thing was that Iran had recognized Herat's independence in writing. The outbreak of the mutiny in India probably was the single most compelling factor in Palmerston's acquiescence.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān had suspected that the Shah would continue to interfere in Herat. Dūst Muḥammad Khān's



son, Ghulām Haydar Khān, the ruler of Qandahār, wrote in June of 1857 to ‘Abd‘allāh Khān, chief of the Jāmshīdī tribe who had supported ‘Isā Khān, telling him that Dūst Muḥammad Khān would soon march on Herat. He called on his fellow Sunnīs to unite in a war against the infidel Shī‘ah:

Thank God, all is well, and the news is as follows. It being the firm determination of his excellency Dost Moh Khan to march in the direction of Herat, where he intends to favour and cherish his friends, and, with the assistance and cooperation of all true Mussulmen and followers of the pure faith (Sunnis) to join in the great cause and overthrow and destroy the enemies of true religion (Shi'ahs).<sup>193</sup>

In a note at the end of the letter, Ghulām Haydar Khān cautioned ‘Abd‘allāh Khān to be aware of the "deceptions of the Kajjar Tribe" which would probably place someone in control of Herat.<sup>194</sup> Obviously he had not yet learned of Sultān Aḥmad Khān's appointment.

The defeat of the Iranian army in the Persian Gulf apparently had a sobering effect on Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. Herat was out of his hands. Having been chastened by a non-Islamic European power, the young Shah suffered the same humiliation his father had. Making war against Britain, as Shujā‘ al-Mulk had said, "was no child's play."<sup>195</sup> Even though the Shah's vizir, Āqā Khān Nūrī, was not willing to give up so easily, he too would have trouble controlling his hand-picked ruler of Herat. Sultān Aḥmad Khān began to feel the Iranian signature on the Treaty of

Paris might actually lead to independence from the Qājār court. The next five years would determine the ultimate victor: Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān, Dūst Muḥammad Khān, or the British.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (October 19, 1855) Agent at Mashhad-Murray (September 17, 1855) (hereafter cited as Great Britain with reel number).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Great Britain, "Correspondence between Great Britain and Persia, respecting the Proceedings of the Persian Government at Herat 1851-1854," British and Foreign State Papers (London: William Ridgeway, 1865) Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (June 15, 1854), XLV:739 (hereafter cited as Great Britain, Papers).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (June 22, 1855), XLVI:95.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (June 15, 1855), XLV:739.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Thomson-Clarendon (September 2, 1854), XLV:740.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., XLV:740-741.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., London, Clarendon-Thomson (November 16, 1854), XLV:741.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (July 15, 1855) Şadr-i A'zam-Murray (July 13, 1855).

<sup>11</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, trans. and ed., The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics 1535-1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 234 (hereafter cited as Hurewitz, Middle East).

<sup>12</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (July 15, 1855) Şadr-i A'zam-Murray (July

13, 1855).

<sup>13</sup>Great Britain, Papers, Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (November 17, 1855), XVII:97.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Şadr-i A'zam-Murray (November 4, 1855), XVII:99.

<sup>15</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (June 27, 1855), see enclosures, including Şadr-i A'zam-Murray (June 26, 1855).

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (September 9, 1855); also see additional enclosures, same volume.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Correspondence (June-September 1856).

<sup>18</sup>Great Britain, Papers, Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (June 22, 1855), pp. 94-95.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., London, Clarendon-Murray (August 1, 1855).

<sup>20</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (November 17, 1855). Murray felt that the Şadr-i A'zam was unable to differentiate between "right" and "wrong" and "truth" and "falsehood" and had the slightest regard for "his own honour and veracity."

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Murray-Şadr-i A'zam (November 4, 1855).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Şadr-i A'zam-Murray (November 4, 1855).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Murray-Şadr-i A'zam (November 8, 1855).

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Şadr-i A'zam-Murray (November 11, 1855).

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Murray-Şadr-i A'zam (November 20, 1855).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (November 20, 1855).

<sup>29</sup>Robert Grant Watson, A History of Persia From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858 (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1866), p. 423 (hereafter cited as Watson, Persia).

<sup>30</sup>Adrienne Doris Hytier, ed., Les Dépêches Diplomatiques du Comte De Gobineau en Perse (Paris: Librairie Minard, 1959), p. 21 fn. (hereafter cited as Hytier, Dépêches).

<sup>31</sup>Watson, Persia, p. 423.

<sup>32</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (November 17, 1855) Murray-Şadr-i A'zam (November 17, 1855).

<sup>33</sup>Watson, Persia, p. 421.

<sup>34</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (November 20, 1855). Murray was so concerned about not receiving orders to break off diplomatic relations that he flooded the Foreign Office with correspondence to support his actions. The letter of November 20, 1855 was typical.

<sup>35</sup>Watson, Persia, pp. 422-423.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (November 20, 1855).

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Great Britain, Papers, Constantinople, enclosure in Stratford-Clarendon (January 3, 1856) Şadr-i A'zam-Stratford (November 29, 1855).

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Constantinople, Stratford-Clarendon (January 3, 1856).

<sup>41</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tabriz, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (February 22, 1856) Tehran, Shah-Şadr-i A'zam (December, 1855).

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (September 28, 1855).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (October 16, 1855) Agent-Murray (September 17, 1855).

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Hurewitz, Middle East, p. 310.

<sup>47</sup>Fayz Muḥammad Hazārah bin Sayyid Muḥammad Mughul, Sirāj al-Tavārikh (Kābul: Matba'ah-i Hurūfī, 1925), pp. 211-212.

<sup>48</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (November 28, 1855) Herat, Muḥammad Yūsif-Agent (October 16, 1855).

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Baghdad, Murray-Clarendon (June 26, 1856). When Clarendon learned of Murray's communications with Herat, he was upset. Murray was told not to have further communications with Herat.

<sup>52</sup>Karīm Isfahāniyan and Quḍrat'Allāh Rawshānī, eds., Majmu'ah-i Asnad va Madarik-i Farrukh Khān Amīn al-Dawlah, 2 vols. (Tihran: Ganjīnah-i Tahqīqat-i Iranī, 1967), II:10 (hereafter cited as Isfahaniyan, Farrukh Khān). The actual letter is reproduced as Figure 3 at the beginning of the volume (see Appendix V). Translated by Ghulām 'Alī Ayeen, Center for Afghanistan Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, Stevens-Murray (December 12, 1855).

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Murray (December 17, 1855).

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tabriz, Murray-Clarendon (January 8, 1856).

<sup>61</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Tehran, Stevens-Murray (December 17, 1855).

<sup>62</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tabrīz, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon, trans. ex. (December 20, 1855).

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Tabriz, Murray-Clarendon (January 8, 1856).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>The Iranian government did not like the fact that Stevens had stayed in Tehran after Murray's departure. They knew he was only there to gather information.

<sup>67</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tabrīz, Murray-Clarendon (February 15, 1856).

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Murray (February 25, 1856).

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Sipihr, Mīrzā Muḥammad Taqī Lisān al-Mulk, Nāsikh al-Tavārīkh-i Salāṭīn-i Qājārīyah, 4 vols. (Tihiran: Kitāb Firūsh-i Islāmīyah, 1965), IV:163 (hereafter cited as Sipihr, Nāsikh al-Tavarikh ); and Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tehran, Stevens-Murray (March 21, 1856).

<sup>72</sup>Sipihr, Nasikh al-Tavarikh , IV:166.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., IV:168.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., IV:163-169.

<sup>75</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tehran, Stevens-Murray (March 21, 1856).

<sup>76</sup>R. Colin Bruce, II, ed., Standard Catalog of World Coins 1981, 7th ed. (Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 1981), pp. 42-43.

<sup>77</sup>Isfahānīyan, Farrukh Khān, II:11.

<sup>78</sup>Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, Narrative of a Journey Through the Province of Khorasan of the N. W. Frontier of Afghanistan in 1875 (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1879), p. 381.

<sup>79</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Baghdād, enclosures in Murray-Clarendon (July 22, 1856) Sām Khān-‘Isā Khān (n.d.).

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., Sultān Murād Mīrzā-‘Isā Khān (Spring, 1856).

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., enclosure in ‘Isā Khān-Mīrzā Rafī Khān (n.d.).

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.



<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., enclosure in 'Isā Khān-Mīrzā Rafī Khān (May 13, 1856).

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Ṣadr-i A'zam-'Isā Khān (June, 1856).

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/156 Baghḍād, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (August 8, 1856) 'Isā Khān-Murray (June 16, 1856).

<sup>93</sup>Royce E. Walters, "Across the Khyber Pass: British Policy Toward Afghanistan, 1852-57," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 1974, pp. 226-228 (hereafter cited as Walters, "British Policy").

<sup>94</sup>Ibid. Walters believes that the failure by Britain to "formulate a clearly defined policy towards Iran" complicated the situation.

<sup>95</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Baghḍād, Murray-Clarendon (August 8, 1856).

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., Baghḍād, Murray-Clarendon (July 22, 1856).

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Great Britain, Papers, Tehran, Ṣadr-i A'zam-Stratford (June 22, 1856), trans. from the French, p. 250.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Sipihr, Nasikh al-Tavarikh , IV:185.

<sup>101</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Baghḍād, enclosure in

Murray-Clarendon (October 10, 1856) 'Isā Khān-Murray (August 12, 1856).

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Governor-General of India (September 28, 1856).

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., Baghdād, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon, 'Isā Khān-Murray (August 12, 1856).

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Governor-General of India (September 28, 1856).

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>In 1836 the ruler of Herat had months to prepare for a similar siege by the army of Muḥammad Shāh, Qājār ruler of Iran.

<sup>108</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tehran, Stevens-Clarendon (September 22, 1856).

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Clarendon (September 22, 1856).

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Clarendon (August 16, 1856).

<sup>113</sup>Great Britain, Papers, London, Clarendon-Stevens (September 22, 1856).

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., Stevens-Clarendon (August 23, 1856).

<sup>115</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157.

<sup>116</sup>Isfahānīyān, Farrukh Khān, I:29-31. The document is given in full in the text. In addition, the first and final pages containing the seal of the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam again

are reproduced from the original (Supp. 12 and 24). Trans. into English by the author of this dissertation.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., I:30.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., I:31.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., I:30.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., I:29.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., I:30.

<sup>122</sup>Great Britain, Papers, London, Clarendon-Stratford (October 28, 1856).

<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., (March 7, 1856).

<sup>126</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tabriz, Murray-Clarendon (March 7, 1857).

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Clarendon (October 8, 1856), quoted from letter of Captain Buhler: "Nos travaux de siège avancent, et dans une dizaine de jours nous arriverons à un fossé."

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Clarendon (October 2, 1856).

<sup>129</sup>Ibid. Stevens felt that these events would bring immediate retribution from the "exasperated and undisciplined Persian Army" if they captured the city.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Stevens-Clarendon (October 8, 1856).

<sup>132</sup>Shannon Caroline Stack, "Herat: A Political and Social Study," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1975, p. 454.

<sup>133</sup>Walters, "British Policy," cites India Office Records, Secret Letters, 41 Foreign Department, no. 43.6.6 in L. to Sec. Com. (22 September 1856).

<sup>134</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tehran, enclosure in Stevens-Clarendon (October 8, 1856) Shujā' al-Mulk-Şadr-i A'zam (October 9, 1856).

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Stevens-Clarendon (October 8, 1856) Bombay, Persian Consul-Şadr-i A'zam (September 18, 1856).

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., London, Clarendon-Stevens (September 27, 1856).

<sup>137</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/158 Baghdād, Murray-Clarendon (May 7, 1857).

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., Baghdād, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (October 21, 1856) Tehran Gazette (October 16, 1856).

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/159 Baghdād, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (December 9, 1856) Tehran Gazette (November 6, 1856).

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., Herat, Taylor-Murray (November 2, 1857).

<sup>146</sup>Hytier, Dépêches, Tehran, Gobineau-Walewski (November 17, 1856), p. 28.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

<sup>148</sup>Great Britain, Papers, Constantinople, Stratford-Clarendon (December 21, 1856), p. 296.

<sup>149</sup>Since Stevens had left Tehran, the British and the Iranians had no viable means of contacting each other.

<sup>150</sup>Iṣfāhāniyān, Farrukh Khān, I:184.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid., I:185.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., I:183.

<sup>154</sup>J. B. Kelly, Britain and the Persian Gulf 1795-1880 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 472 (hereafter cited as Kelly, Britain).

<sup>155</sup>Barbara English, The War for a Persian Lady (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971), pp. 98-99 (hereafter cited as English, Lady).

<sup>156</sup>Kelly, Britain, p. 467.

<sup>157</sup>Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 154 (hereafter cited as Algar, Religion).

<sup>158</sup>Hytier, Dépêches, Tehran, Gobineau-Walewski (November 17, 1856).

<sup>159</sup>Algar, Religion, p. 154.

<sup>160</sup>Hasan-i Fasai, History of Persia under Qajar Rule, trans. and ed. by Heribert Busse (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 321 (hereafter cited as Fasai, Qajar).

<sup>161</sup>Sir James Outram, Lieut.-General Sir James Outram's Persian Campaign in 1857 (London: Smith Elder and

Co., 1860), p. 30 (hereafter cited as Outram, Campaign).

<sup>162</sup>Fasai, Qajar, p. 330.

<sup>163</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/158 Baghdad, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (January 30, 1857).

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., Tehran Gazette (December 25, 1856).

<sup>165</sup>Hurewitz, Middle East, "Defensive Alliance Agreement: The East India Company and the Amir of Balkh, Kabul, and Qandahar," p. 339.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid.

<sup>167</sup>Outram, Campaign, p. 363.

<sup>168</sup>Lt. Ballard, "The Persian War of 1856-57," Blackwood's Magazine (September, 1861), p. 357.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

<sup>170</sup>English, Lady, p. 119.

<sup>171</sup>Fasai, Qajar, p. 333.

<sup>172</sup>Kelly, Britain, p. 488.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid., p. 489.

<sup>174</sup>Great Britain, Papers, Paris, Cowley-Clarendon (February 5, 1857), XLVII:307-313; and Cowley-Clarendon (February 5, 1857), XLVII:312.

<sup>175</sup>Walters, "British Policy," pp. 405-407.

<sup>176</sup>Kelly, Britain, p. 492.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>178</sup>Hurewitz, Middle East, "Treaty of Peace (Paris): Great Britain and Persia 4 March 1857," pp. 341-343.

<sup>179</sup>Muhammad Anwar Khan, England, Russia, and Central Asia, 1857-1878 (Peshawar; University Book Agency, 1963), plates p. 10 cites F.O. 60/216 Clarendon-Murray (May 29, 1857).

<sup>180</sup>Hurewitz, Middle East, Treaty, Article VI, p. 342.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>182</sup>Clarendon Papers, The Private Papers of George William Frederick Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon (1800-1840) Oxford, Bodleian Library, Dep. Document C 138.

<sup>183</sup>Kelly, Britain, p. 493.

<sup>184</sup>Ballard, "The Persian War," pp. 359-360.

<sup>185</sup>English, Lady, p. 134.

<sup>186</sup>Great Britain, Papers, Farrukh Khān-Cowley (March 2, 1857), XVIII:317.

<sup>187</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/158 Baghdād, Murray-Clarendon (May 7, 1857).

<sup>188</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup>*Ibid.*, Herat, Taylor-Murray (October 22, 1857).

<sup>190</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup>*Ibid.*, Tehran, enclosure in Taylor-Clarendon (August 16, 1857) Ghulām Haydar Khān-'Abd'allāh Khān (June 13, 1857).

<sup>193</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/157 Tehran, enclosure in

Stevens-Clarendon (October 8, 1856) Shujā' al-Mulk-Ṣadr-i  
A'zam (October 4, 1856).



CHAPTER IX  
THE END OF IRANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN HERAT  
AND  
DŪST MUḤAMMAD KHĀN'S VICTORY; 1857-1863

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam's Attempts to Subvert the Treaty

Even though Britain forced Iran to recognize Herat and Afghanistan as independent political entities in the treaty ending the Anglo-Persian War of 1856-1857, the Iranian Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī, subverted the terms of the agreement during the rest of his term in office. His involvement in the execution of Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay and his appointment of Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān Bārakzay as "Governor" of Herat in April of 1857, as well as his general interference in Herat's internal affairs negated many of its articles.<sup>1</sup>

Āqā Khān Nūrī still looked on the war with Great Britain as totally the fault of his adversary. On June 5, in a letter addressed to Lord Palmerston in which he welcomed the reestablishment of peace, he placed the blame for the conflict on the British by defending his own actions:

In fact if thus far I found myself alone, due to certain circumstances, in my efforts at maintaining the friendship between the two states which caused me profuse sorrow, now I am certain that

I have an eminent personality of your caliber as my partner and succorer who will not allow, contrary to the past, my efforts to be in vain.<sup>2</sup>

The Şadr-i A'zam added that the Shah too had "dedicated himself to maintaining the traditional friendship of the two dignified Iranian and British states and never consented to an iota of damage to the edifice of this friendship."<sup>3</sup> (See Appendix V for a complete translation and copy of the original letter.) Obviously the Şadr-i A'zam had not been chastened by the recent war and probably felt even more confident knowing that the Indian army had mutinied and was causing serious difficulties for Great Britain.

Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī's acquiescence in Muḥammad Yūsif's execution before the exchange of the ratified document had convinced Sir Charles Murray, the British minister to the Qājār court, and General James Outram, commander of the British expeditionary forces in the Persian Gulf that it was important to monitor closely Iran's compliance with the treaty. To do so, Outram appointed a team of four officers, led by Major R. L. Taylor. Once Murray returned to Herat, Taylor was to proceed to Herat to verify Iranian implementation of the treaty. Outram acted under Article VII of the agreement which allowed for a joint commission to make sure the Afghan and Iranian captives taken during the conflict were released and

returned.<sup>4</sup>

Over a month after the exchange of the ratified treaty, Murray, who was still in Baghdād, received a personal invitation from Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh and the Ṣadr-i A'zam to return to Iran.<sup>5</sup> On the same day, Murray wrote to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Clarendon, that the Tehran government had given Sulṭan Aḥmad Khān 12,000 tomans when he departed for Herat "to assist him in holding his ground."<sup>6</sup> Murray mentioned that the Iranian army was still on Herati soil, "devising pretexts for prolonging their occupation of Herat beyond the time permitted by the treaty."<sup>7</sup> The Iranian army was still inside Herat Province ostensibly to punish Turkmen raiders who were still abducting Shī'ahs to sell as slaves.

The British minister began preparations for his trip to Tehran, and by July 4th had reached Hamadān, inside Iranian territory. Reports reached Murray that in the process of the Iranian occupation of the city, over a thousand Jewish merchant families in Herat had been forced to move to Mashhad because of their importance to the economy of Khurāsān. According to the reports, over 3,000 individuals died on the journey. Though Murray had been cautioned not to antagonize the Iranian government, knowledge of the forced migration marred the possibility

of a smooth reestablishment of diplomatic relations. He queried Clarendon on whether he would be authorized "under the terms of the treaty to insist that these poor people, who were made prisoners and dragged into exile during the war, should be restored to their homes and properties."<sup>8</sup> Murray continued his trip, arriving on July 18, 1857 in Tehran, where he was well received by the Shah and his Ṣadr-i A'ẓam.<sup>9</sup>

It was clear to the British minister that while on the one hand the Iranian government was giving "the strongest assurance of friendship" towards him and pledging to carry out the terms of the treaty "with the utmost fidelity," they were also deliberately subverting its implementation.<sup>10</sup> Murray was in a difficult situation. He had not received orders from London as to whether or not he was to accept Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's appointment as ruler of Herat.<sup>11</sup> His predicament prevented him from taking any significant action to deter the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam's attempts at subversion of the treaty. The difficulty of communication with London and the outbreak of the mutiny in India played into Iranian hands. Murray decided to send his special agent, Major Taylor, to Herat earlier than planned to inform Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān of the terms of the treaty so he would know he did not need to be subservient to Iran.<sup>12</sup>

By the middle of August, the British minister received Clarendon's dispatch of May 29, 1857, telling him not to interfere in Afghan internal affairs.<sup>13</sup> Murray advised Major Taylor to guard against becoming involved with those "plotting or endeavoring to overthrow" Sultān Aḥmad Khān.<sup>14</sup> His information on what was transpiring in Herat was relatively accurate. The British Mission's paid Afghan spy in Herat, Zayn al-Ābidīn, kept it informed of Sultān Aḥmad Khān's activities.<sup>15</sup> Murray had no alternative but simply to tell Taylor to collect as much information as possible with the assistance of the Afghan agent. Major Taylor was instructed to try to convince the new ruler to be friendly to the British, to make sure the Iranian forces evacuated Herat Province, and to see to it that the prisoners on both sides were returned.<sup>16</sup> Murray was frustrated because Iran was providing Sultān Aḥmad Khān financial support to obstruct the British mission, while he was unable to offer the ruler anything tangible.<sup>17</sup>

Opposition from the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam delayed Major Taylor's departure from Tehran. The treaty provided for a "joint commission", but since the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam did not want Iran to participate, he refused to appoint an Iranian contingent.<sup>18</sup> Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī stalled by saying he could not guarantee the safety of Taylor's party past

Mashhad, and needed time to make arrangements. Murray had heard that the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam had sent a letter to Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān opposing the visit, asking him to obstruct Taylor's mission.<sup>19</sup> Even with this interference Murray was sure he could impede Iran's efforts with Zayn al-Ābidīn's help.<sup>20</sup> He described the Afghan agent as shrewd and trustworthy.<sup>21</sup>

Before his departure, Major Taylor met with the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam. The vizir expressed his fear of another Afghan invasion similar to that which had destroyed the Safavid Empire in the early years of the eighteenth century. The main culprit in this new invasion would be Dūst Muḥammad Khān of Kābul, who as a first step would attempt to take Herat.<sup>22</sup> Major Taylor and his small entourage left for Mashhad without approval from Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī. Later, in order to save face, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam requested that his correspondence objecting to the trip be returned.<sup>23</sup> Taylor arrived in Mashhad on September 16th.

On September 8th, Lord Palmerston answered the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam's letter of June 7. Though happy that peace had been restored, he blamed the whole situation on his Iranian counterpart:

...I feel myself obliged to say that the war which took place between our two countries was not owing to any neglect on the part of the English Govt's of the rules of friendship and equity, but was occasioned solely and entirely by Y.E.'s own unfriendly conduct and by the

violent hostility which Y.E. displayed toward England in both word and deed, and therefore so far from Y.E. having been alone in endeavours to preserve friendship between the two Gov'ts. Y.E. was the main and principal cause of the cessation of that friendship.<sup>24</sup>

Palmerston continued, lecturing the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam on his duty to do what was best for Iran: that meant "promoting peace and friendship with England."<sup>25</sup> (See Appendix VI for a complete copy of the text.) While Palmerston struck back at Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī for his letter of June 7th, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam knew that his old adversary was in no position to prevent in any substantive way Iran's continued interference in Herat. In the short-term, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam could act while Britain was bogged down with the mutiny.

Murray was worried about the Iranian perception of British problems because of the mutiny in India. He was angered that the Indian Government had ordered the evacuation of all the British troops in the Persian Gulf except a small contingent at Bū'shahr and on Khārg Island before the Taylor mission could confirm that Iran had removed its troops from Herat. The premature evacuation might convince the Iranians that the British were in serious trouble in India, thus limiting his leverage with the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam.<sup>26</sup> Murray still did not know whether Dūst Muḥammad Khān was taking advantage of the insurrection in India or whether the British Government wanted to encourage his

quest for Herat.<sup>27</sup> Decisions as to future actions would be delayed until he heard from Taylor. Murray was unaware that Dūst Muḥammad Khān was, in fact, under tremendous pressure from the Afghan 'ulamā and many of his soldiers to join with the insurrection in India, but he refused to break his agreement with the British. He had expressed his view of the matter to Lt. Peter Lumsden, of the British Quartermasters Department, stating that he would like to remove non-believers from the earth, but "as this cannot be, I must cling to the British to save me from the cursed Kajjar and having made an alliance with the British Government, happen what may I will keep it faithfully till death."<sup>28</sup>

On arriving in Mashhad, Major Taylor found that the Iranians had indeed withdrawn their troops from Herati territory. He heard reports that their commander, Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, had removed all but a few cannons from the city and left it in ruins.<sup>29</sup> Taylor confirmed that the Jews of Herat were living in abject poverty outside Mashhad and were forced to beg in the streets.<sup>30</sup>

In early October, Murray received Clarendon's dispatch of August 27th instructing him to "discontinue all official demands on behalf of the Jewish prisoners from Herat."<sup>31</sup> He was disappointed at Clarendon's decision not to intervene, and tried to convince him to reconsider.<sup>32</sup>



Murray then ordered Major Taylor to do what he could to alleviate the suffering of the Jews and to try unofficially to get the Iranians to release those who were "bonafide citizens" of Herat.<sup>33</sup> Lord Clarendon obviously did not want any new controversy to disrupt the reestablishment of friendly relations.

While in Mashhad, Taylor met with its Governor, Prince Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, who had commanded the Iranian army which captured Herat in 1856. The prince proposed an alliance between Britain and Iran to defeat the Turkmens and capture Bukhārā and Marv.<sup>34</sup> Though turned away from Herat by British military might, the irredentist Iranians still contemplated expansion into Central Asia. Throughout Qājār rule in Iran, the Turkmens had raided Khurāsān for plunder and captured Shī'ah Iranians to sell into slavery. So Iran had logical defensive reasons for a campaign to stop such incursions. Personal ambition on the part of Prince Murād Mīrzā, however, was also a factor.

Taylor believed the prince wanted a victory against the Turkmens to make himself an alternative to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh; "When the nobles disgraced and estranged, the people oppressed and crying for justice should join...and unanimously declare him king."<sup>35</sup> Taylor listened to Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā's request; after all, it was his job to visit Herat and its newly appointed ruler.

The British as a general rule had not opposed Qājār designs on Marv and Bukhārā since their expansion in that area was seen as a threat to Russia rather than to Great Britain's position in India.<sup>36</sup> When Taylor informed Tehran of his conversation with the prince, Murray was not upset.

### Sultān Aḥmad Khān Courts the British

From the beginning of his rule, Sultān Aḥmad Khān had been viewed by many in Herat Province as an Iranian puppet, not much different from Sayyid Muḥammad Khān 'Alīkūzay, who had ruled before the recent conflict. Sultān Aḥmad Khān was the son of Muḥammad 'Aẓim, the full brother of Faṭḥ Khān Bārakzay and thus a rival and nephew of Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>37</sup> Sultān Aḥmad Khān attracted some support from Afghans who had been opposed to the 'Alīkūzay and Sadūzay leaders in the past. He had fled Qandahār when it fell to his uncle, and thus could not win over those Afghans who favored the Amīr of Kābul. Adding to his difficulty, his war-ravaged province was now truncated; Farāh remained in the hands of supporters of the Amir.

One faction of Heratis, who favored a restoration of the rule of the Sadūzay clan in Herat supported the brother of Muḥammad Yūsif, Muḥammad Riẓā. He was the secret associate of Zayn al-Ābidīn, the British-paid

Afghan spy. Another faction, led by a combination of alienated 'Alīkūzays and Jāmshīdīs, however, presented Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān with his first serious challenge. Taylor reported from Mashhad that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān had discovered a plot by this faction and had seized the leaders.<sup>38</sup>

Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān was politically weak; he sought support where he could find it. The Iranian government was willing to support him, but Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān was anxious to attract British financial and political support. A relationship with Britain would allow him to break his connection with Iran and at the same time protect him from his estranged uncle and rival, Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān. Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān greeted Major Taylor on his arrival in Herat on October 11 with that thought in mind.

The destruction evident in Herat shocked Taylor, who described it in a report to Murray as "one mass of ruins":

The Persian soldiers in sheer wantonness, have removed all the timber props from the houses... The defences (all the serviceable guns and ammunition) have been destroyed, the unripe crops were cut down as well as 6,000 muskets removed, and in fact the city has been left in such a complete state of defencelessness that any rabble army might make it an easy capture.<sup>39</sup>

Taylor confirmed earlier reports that the Iranian army was gone, but complained that they still had not returned all

prisoners, including Jews and Hazarahs.

While Taylor was in Herat, inquiries from Dūst Muḥammad Khān and his son Ghulām Haydar Khān began arriving about Kābul entering an offensive and defensive alliance with Sultān Aḥmad Khān.<sup>40</sup> The ruler of Herat expressed his interest in agreeing to the alliance if it were guaranteed by the British. Taylor had no such power, nor did Murray, and the matter was evidently dropped.

Sultān Aḥmad Khān was still looking for British aid. He told Taylor that the districts of Lash and Juvayn, southwest of the town of Farāh were still under Iran's control, and should be turned over to him. Taylor relayed the messages to Murray, who confronted the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam, demanding that they be returned. Sultān Aḥmad Khān did not seem to be the tool of Iran that Murray believed, as he pressed Taylor to assist him in reestablishing sovereignty over Herat's former dependencies.

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam rejected Murray's demand, claiming that the districts were historically part of Iran. He could not understand why the British would want to turn these areas over to "barbarians and men from the desert."<sup>41</sup> Rejecting Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī's assertion, Murray sent word to the small contingent on Khārg Island not to leave. He wanted to use the British presence on the island to force Iranian consent to the return of Lash and Juvayn. Mīrzā

Āqā Khān Nūrī did not respond for over a month, and replied only after he had learned that all the British troops had left the Gulf. Murray's letter to postpone the departure had not arrived in time.<sup>42</sup>

A long series of written assertions and counter assertions passed between Murray and his rival, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam. Each argued the validity of his own stand on Lash and Juvayn.<sup>43</sup> Taylor continued to report from Herat on his conversations with Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān. Taylor, unlike Murray, thought that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān was pro-British. The ruler of Herat had openly admitted to Taylor that he was a pawn of the Iranians, that he could not survive without outside financial and material support which only Iran was willing to provide. He conceded that he had signed an agreement with the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam before leaving Tehran, promising to mint coins and recite the khuṭbah in the Shah's name, and claimed he had not been privy to the terms of the peace treaty. He asked Taylor to obtain the original agreement for him. In the event that Britain was willing to support him with more than just words, he was willing to switch his allegiance and establish a British connection. In the interim, he would have to continue his association with Iran.<sup>44</sup>

In numerous letters to Lord Clarendon, Murray expressed his frustration that Britain refused to act or

send him instructions of official policy towards Herat. He indicated his resentment of Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī's opposition to him. The British representative was further incensed when Iran continued to send money to Herat while his own hands were tied. Murray was not pleased with the reports Taylor was sending from Herat. He thought Taylor was being misled by Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān and that his reports were therefore confusing the issue.<sup>45</sup> While more antagonistic than Taylor toward Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān, the British minister could more accurately describe Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's character:

...your Lordship has already read enough of Affghans (sic) in general and of the Herat ruler in particular to feel satisfied that he will consult only his own interests, and will prove ultimately faithful (if I may degrade the word by so employing it) to whichever of the two powers he thinks most likely and able to protect him.<sup>46</sup>

Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān was no different from any other Afghan who had ruled Herat since the death of Yār Muḥammad Khān in 1851. They all had aspired to be independent, but found themselves caught between the Iranians and their Bārakzay opponents in Kābul and Qandahār. Murray later referred to Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's position as that of a clay pot between two iron ones.<sup>47</sup>

Regardless of his motives, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān wanted British financial support for his administration and army. His attempt to convince Taylor of his sincerity included

showing him his British-oriented army. Sultān Aḥmad Khān's son, Shāh Navāz Khān, had played a significant role in reorganizing the forces in Herat. He had learned the rudiments of western drill while in Pishāvar and other British camps. He outfitted his soldiers in European dress, and instructed them according to the form used in the Indian army, all of which impressed Taylor.<sup>48</sup> In a display of anti-Iranian sentiment, Sultān Aḥmad Khān had two regimental flags bearing the Iranian lion and sun ripped to shreds in Taylor's presence, and replaced by flags with crossed scimitars and Qur'anic verse. This was obviously directed at Taylor, to prove Sultān Aḥmad Khān was seeking another connection.<sup>49</sup> Murray in Tehran was still not impressed.

#### The Attempt to Overthrow Sultān Aḥmad Khān

Sometime in January, Murray received a letter drafted in late October in London saying: "H. M.'s Government was indifferent whether Herat was virtually or actually subservient to Persia."<sup>50</sup> The exact effect this had on Murray is unclear, but it did coincide with the beginning of a plot to remove the ruler of Herat. Murray had encouraged Zayn al-Ābidīn, the British agent in Herat, to organize a revolt among the followers of Muḥammad Rīzā Sadūzay, the brother of the deceased ex-ruler Muḥammad Yūsif. Murray could not offer much except vague promises of political support and to take care of Zayn al-Ābidīn's family while

he organized the coup.<sup>51</sup> Zayn al-Ābidīn later claimed over Murray's denial that he had written proof that he was under British orders.<sup>52</sup> The agent and Muḥammad Riḏā spent most of the spring and summer of 1858 plotting the takeover.

Murray continued his dealings with the Iranian government, trying to arrange the return of the forts of Lash and Juvayn to Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān. The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam wrote a lengthy retort, claiming interference by Taylor in Herat had persuaded Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān to make the request in the first place.<sup>53</sup> Murray's response to the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam was vitriolic, saying in part:

...this poetical and self-glorifying strain of language may be gratifying to national vanity in the columns of the Tehran Journal or the effusions of the Court Poet and historiographer, but it is impudent to use it in state papers addressed to foreign powers and still more impudent it is on the part of the Persian Gov't to allow it to delude them into the violation of a principal cause of a treaty.<sup>54</sup>

The British minister was unable to place additional pressure on the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam. On the 29th of March, the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam unexpectedly agreed to give Murray, for delivery to Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān, a written disavowal of the demand to mint coins and read the khutbah in the Shah's name in Herat. He also consented to evacuate Lash and Juvayn.<sup>55</sup> This reversal of the Iranian position was a small victory for Murray which he believed was due to the news that the British had put down the mutiny in India.<sup>56</sup>



Whatever the reason, it did not change Murray's plans to topple Sultān Aḥmad Khān.

The British minister's intentions appear to have been strengthened by the letter the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam presented Murray to be sent to Herat. While the letter did say that Iran did not insist on the reading of the khutbah or the minting of coins, it continued:

You are at liberty to do what ever you please without any person taking exception. You are your own master in everything. As it was necessary I have troubled you.<sup>57</sup>

The purpose of the letter was to placate the British and still make it possible for Sultān Aḥmad Khān to continue producing the desired signs of subservience if he so desired.<sup>58</sup> Murray knew that with a subsidy for his government at stake, Sultān Aḥmad Khān's reaction was predictable. Furthermore, Murray learned that the Shah and the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam were preparing to send an army to Sīstān to insure its defense against the Afghans. Murray tried to force the Iranians to give up claims to the area on the grounds that it too belonged to Herat, but on this issue the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam would not budge.<sup>59</sup>

Neither the British minister nor the Iranians knew that in the preceding December, the British Government in London had sent a request to Dūst Muḥammad Khān not to attack Herat and its territories. At the same time, the government reached a secret decision not to prevent him

from taking Herat if he decided to do so.<sup>60</sup> Even after the Palmerston government fell in February of 1858, the policy of succeeding British governments toward the ultimate fate of Herat did not significantly change.<sup>61</sup>

### Russian Involvement

During May of 1858, Nicolas Khanikov, the Russian orientalist and agent of the czar passed through Tehran on a trip to Central Asia and Herat, where he hoped to convince Sultān Aḥmad Khān to sign a commercial treaty. Murray looked on the impending visit as a Russian attempt to subvert British interests in Herat even though Britain was not interested enough to support its ruler.<sup>62</sup>

The situation at Herat remained virtually static during the early summer. Sultān Aḥmad Khān tried to consolidate his position without much success. His main supporter in the Iranian government, Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī, was in trouble. In late August, the Shah removed the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam from his post and arrested him for abusing his position.<sup>63</sup> Murray could not suppress his elation at this, and on August 21st, the day after the event, he went to the Shah, and as he described it:

I began by congratulating H. M. upon his emancipation from the thralldom in which not only the royal dignity but the whole country had been so long, and so unfortunately held, and assured him that from the wise and well judged exercise of this prerogative I augured

a new era of prosperity for his Majesty and for his Kingdom.<sup>64</sup>

The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam had paid for Iran's defeat by the British and for his unbridled concentration of power in the hands of his family. He had become a threat to the Shah's position and therefore had to be removed. Rather than replace him, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh decided to construct a proto-cabinet and government council, modeled after those of Europe. This council, called the Majlīs-i Shaurah-i Dawlatī (State Consultative Council), was styled to prevent anyone from gaining too much power again. The idea pleased Murray, who took credit for suggesting the idea to the Shah. Actually the new form of government had evolved from the Shah's attempt to reform the traditional system.<sup>65</sup>

In September of 1858, Nicolas Khanikov's mission arrived in Herat. For Murray, this was "inopportune".<sup>66</sup> According to the latest reports Murray had received, conspirators in Herat:

...had gained possession of the adjoining country, as well as the town and shut him (Sultan Ahmad Khan) up in the citadel where there is little reason to doubt that he would ere long have found himself compelled by want of his position to surrender.<sup>67</sup>

Murray was sure that Khanikov's arrival prevented the news of the dismissal of his patron from forcing Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān out of power.<sup>68</sup> He now admitted his culpability in the plot in Herat:

This was the consumption to which have tended all the efforts which I have secretly made during the last 6 or 8 months. Efforts necessarily feeble and carried out with the greatest precaution, as I was not authorized to compromise H. M. Gov't myself by offering assistance in the shape of money, political support, and or even promises, nevertheless your lordship is aware from my former dispatches on this subject (acknowledged and approved at the Foreign Office).<sup>69</sup>

Murray's closing remark indicates he was trying to protect himself.

How much the Foreign Office really knew is unclear. There is no evidence to document its involvement. What is clear is that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān knew of the plot, having been informed earlier by the Ṣadr-i A'ẓam. He arrested several of the conspirators, including Zayn al-Ābidīn. Muḥammad Rizā Sadūzay went into hiding in Khurāsān. The Ṣadr-i A'ẓam foiled him again. Murray's position had been compromised by the attempted coup. The next month he departed Iran on leave, which had been planned well in advance. He never returned to his post. He had been in ill health during his time in Tehran and anxious to leave. The plot debacle undoubtedly hastened his plans.<sup>70</sup>

In Herat, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān met with Khanikov, hoping to work out a preliminary trade agreement. The Russians wanted the Herati ruler to set aside a caravanserai for a permanent Russian commercial agent. Khanikov asked that the Russian flag be allowed to fly over the build-

ing.<sup>71</sup> It appears that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān signed a secret agreement with Khanikov which was to be finalized when the ruler traveled to Tehran the following spring. The agreement was a desperate attempt to initiate an alternative to his Iranian connection. Khanikov stayed in Herat only a short time and then intended to travel to Kābul, but Dūst Muḥammad Khān, at the insistence of the British, refused to invite him. The Russian's visit was disconcerting for Murray, but was not crucial to the final outcome in Herat. This was just one of many attempts by the ruler of Herat to find an alternate source of support to protect himself from both Tehran and Kābul. It did, nonetheless, make good reading in the British press, and provided Murray with a scapegoat for his inability to woo Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān away from Iran.

#### British Policy Toward Herat Under Rawlinson

Soon after Murray departed Tehran, Sir Henry Rawlinson arrived as his replacement. Rawlinson quickly came to the conclusion that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān was nothing but an Iranian puppet, and that Herat's status as an independent state was a "sham".<sup>72</sup> He saw little hope for the ruler to maintain any type of independence. Rawlinson had learned, sometime after the failure of the British mission's orchestrated attempt to overthrow Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān, that the Herati ruler was trying once again to reconcile

with his uncle, Dūst Muḥammad Khān. When the Iranian government learned of this, according to Rawlinson, they held up a shipment of two thousand stands of arms, and encouraged their agent in Herat to conspire among alienated members of Kuhandil Khān's family to topple the wavering Bārakzay.<sup>73</sup> Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān dropped his plans to deal with Kābul when he became aware of the conspiracy. Iran allowed the plot to fold; the conspirators fled to Mashhad.<sup>74</sup>

Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's position continued to deteriorate. Dūst Muḥammad Khān's forces were attacking the northern tributary city of Maymanah and the eastern sub-province of Ghūr. Supporters of the Amīr still held territory in the southeast, including the city of Farāh. Because of these pressures and the possibility of a commercial treaty with Russia, or perhaps a new agreement with Great Britain, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān informed the Iranian government of his intention to visit Tehran.<sup>75</sup> The upcoming visit did not please the Iranians, who were unsure what the ruler was trying to accomplish.

On January 3, 1860, Farrukh Khān, now Minister of Provincial Affairs, notified Rawlinson that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān planned to visit Tehran. He told the British minister not to be alarmed, because the Iranian government had not requested the trip. The effect Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's

trip might have on Anglo-Iranian relations was such a concern that the Shah wrote a personal note in the margin of the official notification:

We hope the British envoy will, with his usual discernment and experience, understand that we firmly believe the friendship of England to be infinitely preferable and more advantageous than permanent power over all Afghanistan. And therefore still less to be compared with the mere question of a visit from Sultan Ahmad Khan. If indeed, Sultan Ahmad Khan should have quitted Herat before the courier arrives, and should come to Tehran we can assure the envoy that he will return to Herat in a manner which will be satisfactory to His Excellency.<sup>76</sup>

The Shah tried without success to prevent the trip. By the time word could reach Herat, Sultān Aḥmad Khān was camped outside the city.<sup>77</sup> The message from the Iranian government contained a warning that Tehran would not come to his rescue if Dūst Muḥammad Khān attacked the city in his absence. The Herati ruler claimed he could not return to Herat because it would indicate to his enemies that he had lost favor with the Shah. Besides, Sultān Aḥmad Khān had not left his interests in Herat unprotected. He took most of his rivals with him, leaving his brother in charge.<sup>78</sup>

Rawlinson did not insist that Sultān Aḥmad Khān terminate his travel plans. He was worried, nonetheless, that if the Herati ruler entered Tehran during Naw Rūz it would be misinterpreted. The Iranian New Year was the traditional time when the provincial governors came to Tehran to show their subservience to the Shah. This was

unacceptable to Rawlinson.<sup>79</sup> The Iranian government understood and agreed to make sure the Herati ruler arrived after the festivities.

Since Rawlinson did not know the specific British policy towards Dūst Muḥammad Khān, he was unsure how to approach Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's visit.<sup>80</sup> If Britain favored the Amīr's future annexation of Herat, then Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān could not hope for any British assistance. On the other hand, if British policy was to maintain Herat as an independent state, then Rawlinson would be responsible for cultivating friendly relations with the ruler. The British agent in Mashhad had informed Rawlinson that the Indian Government was still delivering supplies to Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>81</sup>

Farrukh Khān had made Iran's new policy towards Herat Province clear. Iran's only goal now was to keep Herat out of Dūst Muḥammad Khān's hands. He argued that to obtain this goal it was necessary to appeal to Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's fears as well as hopes.<sup>82</sup> Farrukh Khān, according to Rawlinson, argued that Iran:

...valued Herat as a barrier against the power of Cabul, and she was strictly within her rights therefore employing any means, either of intimidation or conciliation to maintain a paramount political influence in this place, so long as she did not invade its territorial integrity, or attain the independence of its chief.<sup>83</sup>



Sultān Aḥmad Khān's Trip to Tehran

Sultān Aḥmad Khān arrived in Tehran after Naw Rūz, and had several meetings with Rawlinson. The British minister impressed upon him Britain's opposition to his signing any type of treaty with Russia.<sup>84</sup> The Iranian Government did the same. In fact, Rawlinson, did not object when Sultān Aḥmad Khān presented the Shah with 1,000 tomans struck in Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's name, fearing his opposition might drive the desperate Bārakzay into Russian arms.<sup>85</sup> As a result of pressure by both the British and Iranian officials, Sultān Aḥmad Khān decided not to sign a commercial treaty with Russia.<sup>86</sup> This greatly upset the Russian minister to the Qājār court Anitchkov, who denounced both Iran and Britain for their interference.<sup>87</sup>

Sultān Aḥmad Khān wanted Rawlinson to send a British representative to Herat. As he did with Taylor before him, he offered to change his reliance on Iran to Britain. He wanted Britain to protect him from Dūst Muḥammad Khān, to restore Farāh to him, and to provide him with modest military assistance.<sup>88</sup> Rawlinson described the ruler's situation to British Foreign Secretary Lord John Russell:

If thus supported by us he would be prepared to subordinate relations with Persia to our views, and in fact, to observe such a general line of policy as it suited us to dictate, but in default of that support he has no alternative, as he has continually pointed out to me, but to continue his present state of dependency on the Government of

Persia, a vassal of the Shah in all but name.<sup>89</sup>

Rawlinson presented Sultān Aḥmad Khān with personal gifts on behalf of the British Government, though they were no match for those given by the Shah. At his departure, the Shah gave the Herati ruler three light field guns, eight hundred muskets, and 12,000 tomans.<sup>90</sup> Even with the great disparity in gifts, Sultān Aḥmad Khān suggested to Rawlinson that someone be sent to Herat to observe the actual state of affairs.<sup>91</sup> Rawlinson thought this was a good idea and in a letter to Lord Russell recommended Major Lewis Pelly for the assignment.<sup>92</sup>

Rawlinson's tour of duty in Iran ended on May 18, 1860. He appointed Pelly chargé d'affaires until the arrival of the new British minister, Sir Charles Alison. Sultān Aḥmad Khān contacted Major Pelly with another offer to give up his Iranian connection for British support. Pelly, who felt it would be best to support Sultān Aḥmad Khān, like all the others, had no authority to do so.<sup>93</sup> Sultān Aḥmad Khān's frequent attempts to gain British assistance was indicative of his desperate situation.

While the Herati ruler was in Tehran, Dūst Muḥammad Khān apparently decided to begin putting additional pressure on the city. He demanded that his nephew either share the tax revenues of the towns of Qal'ah-i Kāh and Anārdarah or turn them over to the Amīr.<sup>94</sup> These towns were north-

west of Farāh and traditionally subject to Herat.

When Sir Charles Alison arrived in Tehran, he sent Major Pelly to Herat. Pelly reached Herat in October, for a three-week stay. He was well received by Sultān Aḥmad Khān. Alison's willingness to send a representative and gifts to Herat, coupled with the sense of legitimacy the visit bestowed, convinced Sultān Aḥmad Khān that the British were sincerely interested in his well-being and the maintenance of Herat's independence. This apparently was partly true of the British mission staff in Tehran, with which Sultān Aḥmad Khān attempted to keep in contact. It was not the case, however, with the London government or that in India. The two governments had chosen Dūst Muḥammad Khān to be their man in Afghanistan. Sultān Aḥmad Khān was expendable. The Herati ruler, with the help of Rawlinson, Pelly, and Alison, deluded himself into a false sense of security. In a letter to Alison, he stated: "After the recent assurances I received of your friendly feelings toward me I am persuaded you will not forget me, but rejoice my heart by the transmission of letters."<sup>95</sup> Friendly feelings were only surface deep. Lord Russell in Britain had decided that Herat should be Dūst Muḥammad Khān's. With increased Russian activity in Central Asia, a re-unified Afghan state was more in British interest than the disunited entity which existed. Britain felt it needed

a buffer zone to prevent the Russian penetration of the subcontinent.<sup>96</sup>

#### Dūst Muḥammad Khān Threatens

Dūst Muḥammad Khān's forces began to tighten their control of areas previously held by Herat. The Shah's ministers were deeply troubled by the possibility that Herat might be affected. Since May of 1860, Iran had sent its ruler a monthly stipend of 1,000 tomans, which would continue unless he entered into an agreement with a third power without the approval of Iran.<sup>97</sup> This policy was aimed at keeping Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān in line.

By 1861, Iran seemed to have given up any hope of actually reincorporating Herat into its empire. An abrupt change of policy had occurred after the ouster of Mirza Āqā Khān Nūrī. Now the Shah and his ministers, especially Farrukh Khān, in charge of provincial affairs, and Mīrẓā Sayyid Khān, Mutma'in al-Mulk, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, seemed interested in maintaining Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān to thwart Dūst Muḥammad Khān's desires to reunite the Dur-rānī kingdom. Iran wanted to keep Britain's friendship because of renewed Russian expansion along the east coast of the Caspian.<sup>98</sup> Nor was Iran able to oppose a well armed Afghan army. The large army the Shah had sent to Marv had suffered a disastrous defeat by the Turkmen in October of 1860. The Turkmen routed the Iranian army of over 30,000

men.<sup>99</sup> The inability of Iran to subdue the poorly armed Turkmens and to prevent them from raiding Iranian Khurāsān no doubt made the Shah and his ministers reconsider their irredentism towards Herat, Bukhārā, and Marv. In February of 1861 the Shah re-appointed Sultān Murād Mīrzā as Governor-General of Khurāsān, with hopes of reversing previous military losses to the Turkmens.<sup>100</sup> The Iranians also had to ward off raids on Sīstān by Muḥammad Sharīf Khān, one of Dūst Muḥammad Khān's other sons.<sup>101</sup>

The preservation of Sīstān as part of Iran was more important to Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh than Herat, Marv, or Bukhārā. The Shah sent a personal message to Charles Alison that Iran could not be expected to stand by while Sīstān was taken by the Afghans.<sup>102</sup> Alison then contacted Muḥammad Sharīf Khān, stating that he hoped it was not true that he was invading Sīstān. Muḥammad Sharīf Khān turned his attention from Sīstān and guided his troops north into Herat's territory.<sup>103</sup>

In the summer of 1861, Sultān Aḥmad Khān sent his wife, the sister of Muḥammad Shārif Khān, and her son, Shāh Navāz Khān, to Farāh to try to settle the differences between Herat and Dūst Muḥammad Khān. Although according to Sultān Aḥmad Khān each side promised not to interyene in the affairs of the other, after his sister returned to Herat, Muḥammad Sharīf Khān raided the town of Sabzavār

and the sub-province of Ghūr, killing its governor, and then returned to the raiding of Sīstān.<sup>104</sup>

In November of 1861, Farrukh Khān complained about Muḥammad Sharīf Khān's actions to Alison. The British minister was powerless to do anything.<sup>105</sup> During the following months the Iranian Government reacted by sending 5,000 troops to Sistan to oppose the Afghans.<sup>106</sup> Farrukh Khān continually pleaded with Alison to find out the official British policy. Was Britain going to allow Dūst Muḥammad Khān to take Herat or not? Alison still did not know, and queried London for an answer.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, Dūst Muḥammad Khān's son, who was Governor of Qandahār, began moving large numbers of troops to the fort of Giriskh, close to the borders of Herat.<sup>108</sup> This continued advance of his enemy forced Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān to take action. In probably his biggest blunder, he decided to recapture Farāh from Dūst Muḥammad Khān's forces.

On March 11, 1862, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān succeeded in retaking Farāh. Over one hundred men on both sides were killed.<sup>109</sup> He then moved into Qandahār Province, taking prisoners and confiscating cattle. This immediate success led ultimately to catastrophe. The defeat of his army and the capture of Farāh were the final events which encouraged Dūst Muḥammad Khān to make an all-out effort to cap-

ture Herat. He believed that the Iranians were behind Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's move. Since he was still receiving a subsidy from the British, after analyzing the possible British reaction, he was confident they would not intervene to save Herat.<sup>110</sup>

The Iranian Government, which did not support Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's offensive, learned of the rash action in April.<sup>111</sup> Farrukh Khān immediately realized the grave significance for Iran and asked Alison to bring it to London's attention that Iran could not remain a passive spectator.<sup>112</sup> The Iranian minister feared a reunified Afghan state. In June, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mīrzā Said Khān, asked that Britain intervene under Article VII of the Treaty of Paris to prevent Dūst Muḥammad Khān's move. He reiterated his government's belief that:

...the war had already begun between the ruler of Herat and Dost Mahomed Khan, provinces had been taken and retaken, and the blood relationship between the two chiefs would no doubt imbitter the feud. Dost Mahomed would march on Herat, and that it was necessary to arrest things now ere they became more embarrassed.<sup>113</sup>

Sir Charles gave assurances that his government wanted to maintain the status quo. Alison seemed to believe this.<sup>114</sup> But neither Lord Russell in Britain nor Governor-General Canning in Calcutta had any intention of preventing Dūst Muḥammad Khān's takeover of Herat.

In late spring, the Iranian Government had received

a letter from Sultān Aḥmad Khān requesting aid. The ruler of Herat felt the Amīr would soon attack him from three sides and he had no choice but to fight, since he felt "comparatively weak, and no match for these potentates."<sup>115</sup> Sultān Aḥmad Khān also wrote to the British mission's agent at Mashhad that he would fight Dūst Muḥammad Khān though "he is a great man and I am a small one."<sup>116</sup>

Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh wrote another personal note to Alison asking that approval for an Anglo-Persian commission for Herat which Iran had suggested earlier be obtained quickly from Lord Russell. He suggested that the message be relayed by way of Baghdād on the new telegraph line.<sup>117</sup> Alison responded affirmatively, adding that Iran could be certain the British Government would "not fail to exert their influence to prevent any aggression directed against Iran from Afghanistan."<sup>118</sup> Of course, using influence to protect Iran did nothing to maintain the status quo in Afghanistan.

The Shah's basic argument was that Farāh and Ghūr had been part of Herati territory and that if Dūst Muḥammad Khān's forces had stayed in their own territory, Sultān Aḥmad Khān would not have been forced to react. It was Dūst Muḥammad Khān who had destroyed the status quo.<sup>119</sup>

On June 30, 1862, the Shah again sent for Sir Charles and urged him to prevent the Amīr from taking



Herat. Alison told him he had no authority to do so and that it was a moot point until instructions arrived in response to the telegraph message. The Shah wanted Alison to send the commission without waiting for permission, arguing:

Were the Afghans a civilized people whose word could be trusted, the case would be different. But turbulent, sanguinary, and faithless to treaties as they were, Persia could not be at ease unless the status quo was preserved.<sup>120</sup>

The Shah later requested another telegram be sent. Alison agreed to this, but blamed the whole problem on Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's attack on Farāh. By this time he had received reports that Dūst Muḥammad Khān's son, Muḥammad Sharīf Khān was besieging Farāh.<sup>121</sup> Farrukh Khān kept pleading with Alison to intervene and invariably Alison would respond by saying he would contact London.<sup>122</sup> While Alison waited for instructions from London, another of the Amir's sons, Muḥammad Amīr Khān, informed 'Atā Khān, one of the chiefs of Herat, that his father had made an agreement with the British to take Herat:

The agreement between the Governments is that during the present year Herat is to be taken from Sultan Ahmed Khan, and to pass into the possession of the Afghan Government and is with its dependencies to be ruled and governed by Dost Mahomed Khan.<sup>123</sup>

Lord Russell's reticence and failure to send a clear statement of policy in response to Iranian inquiries, added to the policy of non-intervention in Afghanistan and the sub-

sidy to Dūst Muḥammad Khan, all indicate that some type of unwritten understanding had been made between the Amīr and the British.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān's forces took Farāh on July 6, 1862, and afterwards executed some of the Bārakzay captives, further intensifying the blood feud. By the 19th of July, they had captured Sabzavār.

### Herat Under Siege

Sultān Aḥmad Khān found himself in an untenable military position. Surrounded by hostile forces, he had little choice but to prepare for a siege or surrender. Partly in reaction to the anti-Iranian sentiment inside Herat, Sultān Aḥmad Khān early in the summer decided to make a preliminary stand outside Herat at the fort at Pul-i Malan, on the main caravan road between Herat and Qandahār.<sup>124</sup> He ordered the bastions repaired and the fort stocked with supplies. Several thousand of his followers joined him there. The Iranian Government subsidized his preparation by sending him large amounts of money. He also bought supplies on credit, sending the bills to Mashhad.<sup>125</sup> He reported seized members of his opposition in Herat and put to death approximately twenty people, including two of his own tribe.<sup>126</sup>

The Herati ruler had tried several times to communicate with Aliṣon in Tehran. In his July 10th letter

he complained about not receiving replies, and asked pointedly: "I wish to know whether I am to continue to write in spite of getting no answer?"<sup>127</sup> Alison's silence was further indication that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān could expect no help from the British. On July 19th, Alison had received the following telegraph message from Lord Russell concerning his request in June for a decision on a joint commission: "With respect to Farah no ground is afforded for taking action either in permitting H. M. the Shah's interference or in approving of his active intervention."<sup>128</sup> The message went on to say that if Herat were attacked, London would reconsider Russell's orders--another sign of Russell's intention to let Dūst Muḥammad Khān take Herat. He was well aware that the time required for an additional round of correspondence or telegraph message was sufficient for Dūst Muḥammad Khān to have his siege well underway.

On July 22nd, Dūst Muḥammad Khān communicated with the isolated Bārakzay ruler of Herat, telling him to:

...get ready your friends, your provisions, powder, and lead. I will not starve you but on the 27th of July I will be before your gates and from that time I will not let you swallow a drop of water in quietness.<sup>129</sup>

In a last attempt to push the Amir out of his territory, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān sent a force against the Amīr's army. The Kābul forces defeated them. This forced Sulṭān Aḥmad

Khān and his followers to return to Herat and make final preparations for a siege.

On the 27th of July the siege of Herat began. The septuagenarian Amīr arrived on top of an elephant. He apparently was unconcerned about an Iranian reaction. Afghan merchants in Mashhad reportedly had informed him that "the Kajars dare not aid Herat from fear of the English."<sup>130</sup> The merchants' judgment was correct.

The Governor of Khurāsān, Prince Sulṭān Murād Mīrzā, did not have permission from Tehran to intervene. Frustrated, he drew up plans for the defense of Herat and mobilized his troops.<sup>131</sup> Even though he organized a large force to move toward Herati territory, he did not intend to attack. According to a report from Col. M. Dolmage, an Englishman in the Iranian army, in June the prince was most concerned over the possibility that Dūst Muḥammad Khān's attack on Herat would spill over to Iranian Khurāsān. Dolmage believed that "the Prince will try the plan of raising a religious war cry under pretense the English and Sunnīs wish to make an end to the Shī'ahs."<sup>132</sup>

On the same day that Dūst Muḥammad Khān began his siege of Herat, Alison sent another message to Baghdād to be relayed by telegraph to Lord Russell in London. He wanted his superior to know that Farrukh Khān had indicated that Iran no longer cared about Farāh, but implored

"to be protected against the Dost." He implied that Iran might turn to the Russians for aid.<sup>133</sup> Iran continued to pressure Alison to do something. The British minister finally made a small gesture to placate the Iranian Government. He decided, without consulting London, to dispatch Edward B. Eastwick, the secretary of the legation, to Mashhad to gather firsthand information. Informing Lord Russell of his action afterward, he declared:

Matters are exceeding grave, if the Dost takes Herat--Persia may be at his mercy. The king is in despare and cannot understand the reticence of the English Government.<sup>134</sup>

Soon after this, when Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh asked Alison whether he would mind if Iran sent a small force into Herati territory to protect one of the main defiles into Iran, Alison did not object.<sup>135</sup> On the same day, however, Alison received orders from Lord Russell barring any interference whatsoever.<sup>136</sup> The Iranian Government was unwilling to risk war against Britain again. Even after an Iranian envoy had returned from the camp of Dūst Muḥammad Khān with a message from the Amīr that he planned to occupy Herat and annex it to his kingdom, the Shah remained passive.<sup>137</sup>

The Amir was so confident of his position that in response to a threat by Iran to help Herat, he boasted:

Well, do so if you dare, for the English Government will not allow you further to violate a treaty, which you have already in part violated

by accepting allegiance from Sultan Ahmed Khan and making him coin money in your King's name, and even if the English should not interfere think not that I am afraid, for I can bring into the field an army better equipped and paid than Persia, and there is not an Afghan that will not stand by me to the last against the Kajars.<sup>138</sup>

When the Iranian envoy threatened to ask for Russian aid, Dūst Muḥammad Khān reportedly quipped: "Very well, if you like to lose your country sooner than necessary, you may do so."<sup>139</sup>

By the time the British secretary Eastwick arrived at Mashhad, in early September, 1862, Dūst Muḥammad Khān had control of all parts of Herat Province except the capital itself. The Iranian Government attempted to send soldiers to Khurāsān from Tehran in case the Amīr moved into Iranian territory, but they refused to go, choosing to seek a sanctuary. They feared they would be taken prisoner by the British. Alison believed this action was an indication of the general feeling in Tehran that the British were supporting Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>140</sup> It was only a matter of time until Herat would fall. Eastwick reported that Sultān Aḥmad Khān had expelled all the Afghans from Herat except those in his immediate family, and that he was relying on the Persian speakers and other Shi'ah soldiers for support.<sup>141</sup>

In October, Eastwick received frequent reports of fighting around Herat, the desertion of forces supporting

Sultān Aḥmad Khān, and the capture of large numbers of his forces by Dūst Muḥammad Khān.<sup>142</sup> On the 24th, Eastwick received a visit from Ḥasan 'Ali Khān, Sultān Aḥmad Khān's vizir. Ḥasan 'Ali Khān was in Mashhad on a special mission. Eastwick did not want to discuss "business" with him. As a result, the vizir launched into "a long tirade against Dūst Muḥammad Khān," without any result. Eastwick's comment on the meeting was that the vizir at least had saved his own head by getting out of Herat.<sup>143</sup>

A few days later, Eastwick met with Prince Murād Mīrzā, who mentioned that the revenues of Herat were only 100,000 Heratī tomans ( 38,000), and that this was not enough to pay expenses.<sup>144</sup> Thus Herat was no valuable prize, but a liability for whomever controlled it. In a later meeting, the prince argued that Iran had been interested in the control of Herat only for strategic reasons, and to control Turkmen raids on Khurāsān.<sup>145</sup> He went on to say:

...placed as I am here to defend a province which ought to be the brightest jewel in the Persian crown, and seeing, as I do, the waste and desolation caused by the merciless lords of the Turkomans...I am at a loss to understand the behavior of the English...England shackles and impedes every effort that the Persian Government makes for the protection of its own subjects, and by expelling Persia from Herat, and even discouraging a friendly alliance between the two countries, renders the tranquillity of Khurasan impossible.<sup>146</sup>

The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mīrzā Said Khān, in conversation with Alison continually stressed Iran's fear of an Afghan invasion. He tended to blame the trouble between the Afghans and Iran on the religious differences between Sunnī and Shī'ah.<sup>147</sup> He also referred to the Afghans as "uncivilized" and "beasts of prey" whose main objective was to conquer Iran.<sup>148</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs feared any powerful Sunnī coalition on Iran's eastern border made up of Afghans and Turkmens.

Alison had been concerned enough about Dūst Muḥammad Khān's plans that he wrote to the Amīr. The Amīr assured him:

Please God...no movement of any kind whatsoever will be undertaken by Our Majesty which can become the cause of apprehension in men's minds. You keep your mind assured and at rest in all respect.<sup>149</sup>

What the Amīr was saying in the vague exchange, was that he would not invade Iran. When Alison showed the correspondence to the Iranian ministers, their only remark was that Dūst Muḥammad Khān had assumed the royal style in his writing.<sup>150</sup>

Rumors circulated in Tehran that the British had decided to support Iran in the Herat issue. Alison requested a clarification from London, but there was no change in British policy.<sup>151</sup> Sir Charles left Tehran in November to return to London. Eastwick was to be charge



d'affaires, and therefore returned to Tehran. On December 26, 1862, Eastwick received apparently his last communication from Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān, who thought he was still in Khurāsān. The Herati ruler asked for justice from the British. Eastwick did not respond.<sup>152</sup> Later Eastwick wrote that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān had looked to him "as the drowning man does to a straw." Eastwick said further:

It was his only chance of life, and though he deserved little at our hands, for he looked on at the murder of Sir W. MacNaghten (in Kabul, December 22, 1841) if he did not take an active part in it, yet still, we had recognized him as ruler of Herat, and had spoken him fair, and it would have been a magnanimous act to have saved his life.<sup>153</sup>

About the same time that Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān was appealing for help, merchants were conveying grain from Mashhad, not for Herat, but for Dūst Muḥammad Khān's camp.<sup>154</sup>

In January of 1863, residents of Herat daily found ways to sneak out of the city for Dūst Muḥammad Khān's camp.<sup>155</sup> Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's son, Shāh Navāz Khān, also tried to negotiate a settlement with the Amīr of Kābul. If the ruler of Kābul would agree to withdraw, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān would recognize him as his sovereign. Dūst Muḥammad Khān did not accept the offer, and continued the siege.

Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān died in Herat on March 6th. He had been suffering from a form of paralysis for some time, and was in ill health in his final days. Shāh Navāz Khān took over, but was unable to rally support to his cause.

Finally, on May 27, 1863, Dūst Muḥammad Khān's forces, with the aid of pro-Kābul Jāmshīdīs within Herat, were able to penetrate the walls and capture Herat. The assault was brutal, killing many of the defenders.<sup>156</sup> The Amīr annexed Herat to his kingdom immediately.

Dūst Muḥammad Khān had fulfilled a lifelong ambition to reincorporate Herat into a united Afghan state under his control. The Qājār dynasty had finally lost the last vestige of its influence in Herat. But Dūst Muḥammad Khān was not long to share in his victory. He died in Herat within two weeks of the capture of the city, on June 9th. He was buried there, near the tomb of the famous poet Khudjā 'Abd'allāh Ansārī.<sup>157</sup> He had named his son, Shīr 'Alī Khān successor (see Figure 5).

Dūst Muḥammad Khān's death meant continuous trouble in Herat. Shīr 'Alī Khān had to leave Herat in order to secure his position in Kābul. He left his sixteen-year-old son Muḥammad Yakub Khān there as Governor. The European traveler Arminius Vambery visited Herat only six months after its fall to the Amīr. According to Vambery, the "Heratis" still viewed the Kābulīs as oppressors, and the long-term Afghan residents also were hostile to the other Afghans who had conquered them. Sultān Murād Mīrzā, Prince Governor of Khurāsān, sent an envoy to Herat, as Vambery states: "to congratulate the new Sarder of Herat,

on his appointment."<sup>158</sup>

The fall of Herat to the Afghans of Kābul ended the Qājār dream of regaining Herat. When Vambéry met with Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh in Tehran a few months following his visit to Herat, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh apparently questioned him as to the state of the city. When Vambéry told him that "Herat was a heap of ashes, and that Heratis were praying for the welfare of his majesty of Persia," the King could only respond that he "had no taste for such ruined cities."<sup>159</sup> Herat was gone--for better or worse the city and province were once again absorbed into a Durrānī-dominated state.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, trans. and ed., The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics 1535-1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 341-343 (see Articles 35, 67, and 8).

<sup>2</sup>Broadlands Mss., Palmerston Papers, The Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, MM/PE/6/1/ Šadr-i A'zam-Palmerston (June 5, 1857) (hereafter cited as Palmerston Papers with number).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/158 Baghdad, Outram-Clarendon (May 23, 1857) (hereafter cited as Great Britain with reel number).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Baghdād, Murray-Clarendon (June 8, 1857).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Baghdād, Murray-Clarendon (June 6, 1857).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Hamadān, Murray-Clarendon (July 6, 1857).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., Camp near Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (July 20, 1857).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Camp near Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (August 15, 1857).

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (August 17, 1857).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (August 17, 1857) Murray-Taylor (August 12, 1857).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (August 15, 1857).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (August 31, 1857) Taylor-Murray (August 15, 1857).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (August 31, 1857).

<sup>24</sup>Palmerston Papers, BE/7/212889, Palmerston-Sadr-i A'zam (September 8, 1857).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/158 Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (August 31, 1857).

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Peter Lumsden and George R. Elsiner, Lumsden of the Guides: A Sketch of the Life of Lieut.-General Sir Harry Burnett Lumsden (London: John Murray, 1899), p. 137.

<sup>29</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/158 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (October 2, 1857) Mashhad, Taylor-Murray (September 17, 1857).

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (October 5, 1857).

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Taylor-Murray (September 26, 1857).

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ludwig W. Adamec, Historical and Political Who's Who of Afghanistan (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-u Verlagsanstalt, 1975), see "Genealogies of Afghan Families," Table 1.

<sup>38</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/158 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (October 2, 1857) Taylor-Murray (September 17, 1857).

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (November 5, 1857) Herat, Taylor-Murray (October 12, 1857).

<sup>40</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/159 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (January 29, 1858) Herat, Taylor-Murray (December 18, 1857).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Ṣadr-i A'ẓam-Murray (January 7, 1858).

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (February 28, 1858) Murray-Ṣadr-i A'ẓam (February 22, 1858).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (December 15, 1857) Herat, Taylor-Murray (October 22, 1857).

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., see correspondence between Taylor and Murray from Herat (October, November, December, 1857).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (January 15,

1857).

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (February 28, 1857).

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (December 15, 1857) Herat, Taylor-Murray (November 2, 1857).

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office 60/219, London, Clarendon-Murray (October 28, 1857).

<sup>51</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/161 Tehran, enclosure in Rawlinson-Russell (April 24, 1860) Muḥammad Riẓā Mīrẓā-Zayn al-Ābidīn (n.d.).

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/159 Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Clarendon (February 28, 1858) Ṣadr-i A'ẓam-Murray (February 22, 1858).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (February 22, 1858).

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Clarendon (March 29, 1858).

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Murray-Malmesbury (May 1, 1858) Ṣadr-i A'ẓam-Sultān Aḥmad Khān (April 7, 1858).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Malmesbury (April 30, 1858).

<sup>60</sup>Royce E. Walters, "Across the Khyber Pass: British Policy Toward Afghanistan, 1852-57," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 1974, p. 360.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/159 Tehran, Murray-Malmesbury (May 30, 1858).

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Malmesbury (August 31, 1858).

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.; also see Shaul Bakhash, Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform under the Qajars: 1852-1896 (Oxford: St. Anthony's, 1978), pp. 4-5.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Malmesbury (September 14, 1858).

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Murray-Malmesbury (September 30, 1858).

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/160 Tehran, Rawlinson-Wood Barte (January 2, 1860).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Farrukh Khān-Rawlinson (January 3, 1860).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., Rawlinson-Russell (February 27, 1860).



<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Rawlinson-Russell (February 27, 1860).

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Rawlinson-Russell (March 28, 1860) Mashhad, British agent-Murray (March 1, 1860).

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Rawlinson-Russell (February 27, 1860).

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/161 Tehran, Rawlinson-Russell (April 25, 1860).

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Rawlinson-Russell (May 17, 1860).

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Pelly-Russell (June 7, 1860).

<sup>88</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/161 Tehran, Rawlinson-Russell (May 17, 1860).

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Pelly-Russell (June 7, 1860).

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Pelly-Russell (June 12, 1860).

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Alison-Russell (January 5, 1861) Herat, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān-Alison (December 6, 1860).

<sup>96</sup>Mohammed Anwar Khan, England, Russia, and Central Asia 1857-1878 (Peshawar: University Book Agency, 1963), pp. 22-27 (hereafter cited as Khan, England).

<sup>97</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/160 Tehran, Pelly-Russell (May 22, 1860).

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/161 Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (October 30, 1860) Herat, Pelly-Russell (October 11, 1860).

<sup>100</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/162 Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (February 16, 1861).

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (May 20, 1861).

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Muhammad Sharif (May 20, 1861).

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., Gulahak, enclosure in Alison-Russell (June 23, 1861) Mashhad, Agent-Alison (June 14, 1861).

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (November 19, 1861) Mashhad, Agent-Alison (October 9, 1861).

<sup>106</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/163 Tehran, Alison-Russell (February 3, 1861).

<sup>107</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/162 Tehran, Alison-Russell (November 19, 1861); and L/P&S/9/163, Alison-Russell (April 22, 1862).

<sup>108</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/163 Tehran, Alison-Russell (February 11, 1862).

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (April 2, 1862).

<sup>110</sup>Khan, England, pp. 26-27.

<sup>111</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/163 Tehran, Alison-Russell (April 22, 1862).

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (June 14, 1862).

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., Camp near Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (June 20, 1862) Ruler of Herat-Farrukh Khān (n.d.).

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., enclosure in same letter, Mashhad, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān-British agent (May, 1862).

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (June 20, 1862).

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., Camp near Tehran, Alison-Russell (June 30, 1862).

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (June 30, 1862) Mashhad, Agent-Alison (June 22, 1862).

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/164 Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (August 19, 1862) Muḥammad Amīr Khān-ʿAtā Khān (June 24, 1862).

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., Camp near Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (June 30, 1862) Mashhad, Agent-Alison (June 22, 1862).

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (August 5, 1862) Agent at Mashhad-Alison (July 13 through 17, 1862).

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

- <sup>127</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (August 5, 1862).
- <sup>128</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (July 19, 1862).
- <sup>129</sup>Ibid., enclosure in Alison-Russell (August 5, 1862) Mashhad, Dolmage-Eastwick (July 30, 1862).
- <sup>130</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/164 Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (August 11, 1862) Colonel Dolmage-Alison (August 5, 1862).
- <sup>131</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/163, enclosure in Alison-Russell (August 5, 1862) Mashhad, Dolmage-Eastwick (July 30, 1862).
- <sup>132</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (July 10, 1862), Mashhad, Dolmage-Eastwick (June 21, 1862).
- <sup>133</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (July 27, 1862).
- <sup>134</sup>Great Britain, L/P&S/9/164 Tehran, Alison-Russell (August 5, 1862).
- <sup>135</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (August 22, 1862).
- <sup>136</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>137</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (August 24, 1862).
- <sup>138</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (September 10, 1862) Dolmage-Alison (August 23, 1862).
- <sup>139</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>140</sup>Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (September 10, 1862).
- <sup>141</sup>Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (September 19, 1862) Mashhad, Eastwick-Alison (September 8, 1862).
- <sup>142</sup>Edward B. Eastwick, Journal of a Diplomat's Three

Years' Residence in Persia, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1864), II:217-219 (hereafter cited as Eastwick, Journal).

143 Ibid., II:241.

144 Ibid., II:244.

145 Ibid., II:252-253.

146 Ibid., II:251.

147 Great Britain, L/P&S/9/164 Tehran, Alison-Russell (September 21, 1862).

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Alison-Russell (October 20, 1862) Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān-Alison (October, 1862).

150 Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (October 20, 1862).

151 Ibid., Tehran, Alison-Russell (November 1, 1862).

152 Ibid., Tehran, enclosure in Eastwick-Russell (December 30, 1862) Herat, Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān-Eastwick (received December 28, 1862).

153 Eastwick, Journal, II:200.

154 Great Britain, L/P&S/9/165 Tehran, enclosure in Eastwick-Russell (December 30, 1862).

155 Ibid., Tehran, Thomson-Russell (February 4, 1863).

156 Arminius Vambery, Travels in Central Asia (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), p. 325.

157 Ibid., p. 330.

158 Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 342.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSIONS

The realignment of political power on the Iranian highlands between 1747 and 1796 produced a situation which prevented the newly emerged Qājār dynasty of Iran from reasserting Iranian political control over the eastern territories. The consolidation of political power by the Shī'ah Qājār Iranians in the west, and the Sunnī Durrānī Afghans in the east created two new antagonistic political, ethnic, and religious entities which changed the framework of power on the highlands.

The refusal of Qājār Iran to recognize that the Sunnī Durrānīs had not only created their own independent sultanate, but had also developed their own sense of empire some fifty years before the Qājārs came to power in the west, led the Qājārs on a quest for control of Herat Province and the rest of former Safavid lands in the east. By continuing to strive for dominance in Herat, they kept Khurāsān in an almost constant state of instability.

The period from 1796 to 1863 proved to be crucial for the survival of the independent Durrānī polity on the eastern highlands. The conflict over Herat between the

Qājār Iranians and the Durrānī Afghans dominated political relations between the two groups. The regional struggle over which group would have sovereignty determined the policy of Iran towards the Afghans and vice versa. Whether the British or the Russians would gain dominant influence and power in Central Asia was considered only a complicating factor by the two indigenous powers. Thus a non-Eurocentric examination of the political relationship between the Qājār dynasty in Iran and the Durrānī Afghans is indispensable to an understanding of the history of the region during this period.

In examining the objectives of Iranian policy towards Herat between 1796 and 1863, a consistent pattern can be discerned. One, Iran wanted to exert hegemony over Herat Province by forcing its Afghan rulers to pay tribute, strike coins, and read the khutbah in the Shah of Iran's name, and to allow the stationing of Iranian troops within Herat's borders, all of which would demonstrate submission. Two, Iran wanted to use Herat as a base for further expansion: to the north, into Balkh, Maymanah, and to the Āmū Daryā; to the southeast into Qandahar; and, if possible, north to Kābul.

The Qājār dynasty had to modify its goals in the 1850's because of British and Afghan opposition. Then the primary concern was to prevent Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān



Bārakzay of Kābul from reuniting Kābul, Qandahār, and Herat into a militant Durrānī state. Secondly, Iran concentrated its irredentist activities on Herat, hoping to annex the province by political means, and, as a last resort, militarily.

Objectives of the Durrānī rulers of Herat in the period 1796 through 1863 were also consistent. One, from 1800 to 1816, the ruler of Herat attempted to maintain independence from Iran as well as from the Durrānī monarch in Kābul. Two, after 1818 the Sadūzay rulers of Herat were willing to use whatever means necessary to remain autonomous from both the Qājār dynasty and the Bārakzay rulers of Kābul and Qandahār. Three, the Afghan rulers of Herat wanted to expand their domain at the expense of their regional rivals. Four, the Afghan rulers wanted to regain, if possible, the rest of the Durrānī realm for themselves.

The objectives of the Bārakzays of Qandahār and Kābul in the regional conflict were basically to gain control over all of the Durrānī state. They continually sought aid from whomever would help them, so long as such acceptance of support did not compromise their own sovereignty.

British objectives on the Iranian highlands before 1828 were: one, to support Iran as a barrier against continued Russian expansion, unless it would result in a war

in Europe; and two, to gain economic concessions which would benefit British trade. After 1828, they changed their strategy, deciding to protect the Durrānī domain ("Afghanistan") from occupation by Iran. They had to maintain the Durrani domain as a buffer zone against the possible Russian threat to their empire in India.

The Russians, while having a major impact on Iran, had less influence on events in Herat Province. Their objectives between 1796 and 1828 were: one, to consolidate their hold on the territories taken from Iran in the Russo-Persian wars; two, to gain more economic and political influence in Iran; and three, to neutralize British influence in Iran. After the Crimean War (1854-1856) the Russians tended to seek maintenance of the status quo in Iran and were not a major factor in the conflict over Herat of 1856-1857 or in the final surrender of Herat to Dūst Muḥammad Khān in 1863.

The French played an important role in Iran only up to the defeat of Napoleon. They had no significant effect on the Herat question except for their role as advisors to Iran during the Paris peace negotiations in 1857.

Āghā Muḥammad Khān, the first Qājār Shah of Iran, was able to retake part of western Khurāsān, but his hegemony in Khurāsān marked the Qājārs' first attempt to retake this buffer zone by military force, a sharp departure from

the policies of the former Zand rulers of Iran. The desire to retake Khurāsān and Herat did not die with Āghā Muḥammad Shāh: Fath 'Alī Shāh's forces in 1802 captured Mashhad, and in 1807 and again in 1816 moved toward Herat with the ultimate goal of conquest. After failing three times in twenty years, they still did not give up hope. The new Iranian dynasty firmly believed it had a legitimate right to rule over all of the old Safavid territory. The collapse of the Sadūzay-controlled Durrānī sultanate following the death of Fath Khān Bārakzay in 1818 encouraged their hopes for eventual dominance in the east. They were further encouraged by treaties negotiated by their representatives with the British in 1801 and 1814, and the French under General Gardanne in 1807.

The Iranian desire to recapture Herat, while motivated by political, cultural, and religious considerations, was also encouraged by the Afghans, who kept in constant contact with Tehran and sought Iranian support in their various internecine struggles. Thus the Qājārs felt the Afghans had acquired obligations toward the central authority in Tehran, which in turn gave them a de facto right to intervene. The Iranians were lured to conquer the eastern highlands, and to some extent they were supported in their quest by the intended victims. For example, Fīrūz al-Dīn Sadūzay, ruler of Herat 1800-1816, had been sup-

ported in exile at the Qājār court before he took power. When he held power in Herat, he tried to keep a distance between himself and his former benefactors. Later he fled to Iranian territory, after Fath Khān Bārakzay removed him from power in 1816, and again sought the aid of the Iranians.

The conflict between Kāmran Mīrzā Sadūzay and Iran in 1823 led to promises to pay tribute to the Shah of Iran. The nominal sovereign of Herat, Maḥmūd Shāh, consistently demonstrated Herat's independence and his equality with the Shah of Iran by striking coins and having the khuṭbah read in his own name, and finding excuses for not paying tribute. The Sadūzay ruler of Herat and his son faced threats on Herat's eastern borders. The Bārakzays of Qandahār and Kābul were constantly plotting to overthrow their cousins and rivals in Herat and each other.

After suffering defeat at the hands of the Russians in two wars (1803-1813 and 1826-1828), the Iranians gave up hope of expanding to the northeast. Thereafter they concentrated all their irredentist ambitions on Khurāsān. The British failure to help the Iranians against the Russians destroyed any trust the Iranians had in Britain's word. Britain became the major barrier against the fulfillment of the Qājār dynasty's goals.

Prince ʿAbbās Mīrzā Qājār's attack on Herat in 1833

ended after his death, when his son, Muḥammad Mīrzā, had to return to Tehran to assure his position as heir apparent. The British, who had not discouraged Qājār expansion into Durrānī territory before 1828, now opposed it, because they feared Russia's advantages under the treaty of Turkmanchay would be at their own expense. The British gave up the idea of Iran serving as a buffer zone against Russian expansion, and concentrated now on the eastern highlands, which had served a similar function during the Safavid and Mughal period.

The Durrānīs and Qājārs pursued their own political goals, and posed such a threat to the British that the Anglo-Persian and Anglo-Afghan wars of 1837 and 1839 resulted. The 1837 Iranian attack on Herat, planned by the Iranian vizir Ḥājji Mīrzā Āqāsī, failed not because of the British, but because of the strength of the Sadūzay Durrānī opposition. There is no question that the Russians encouraged the Iranian move, with political and military support, but they were not the deciding factor. Neither was the military assistance and financial aid given to Kāmran Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān by Eldred Pottinger and John McNeill. The ill-timed, disorganized Iranian campaign to Herat collapsed due to the capable resistance of the Afghans, and only secondarily British opposition. The victor in the first Anglo-Persian war was neither the Iranians nor the

British, but the Afghans of Herat, who somehow managed to survive. Indisputably it was Sir John McNeill's providing the Iranians with an acceptable pretext for withdrawal, and not the landing of five hundred troops on Khārg Island without any backup which allowed the Shah to end the untenable siege.

The conflict over Herat was further complicated by the affairs of the Bārakzay rulers of Qandahār and Kabul. The advance of the militant Sikhs to Pishāvar and their alliance with the British further alienated the Bārakzays from the British. Sikh expansion kept the Durrānī domain in a state of instability.

The ill-fated British attempt to place Shujā' al-Mulk Sadūzay on the throne in Kābul in order to create a British-controlled buffer zone against Russia ironically drove Kāmran Shāh and Yār Muḥammad Khān into the arms of the Shah of Iran. The British forced them to choose between a political connection with a Muslim, albeit Shī'ah rival, and an infidel European power, which had conquered much of the Indian subcontinent and was now ravaging the Durrānī domain. The refusal of Lord Auckland to accept nothing less than control over Dūst Muḥammad Khān's foreign policy backfired. The result was one of the major British military disasters of the nineteenth century, in the gorges between Kābul and Jalal'ābād.

The fact that the Qājārs had obtained written recognition of their claimed sovereignty over Herat from its rulers had no appreciable effect on the British after the return of Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān to Kābul. They simply chose to ignore Herat's submission because it was not in the British interest, and they knew the Afghans would side with them on this issue for their own reasons.

Yār Muḥammad Khān's execution of Kāmran Shāh in 1842, while ending Sadūzay rule in Herat, placed this consummate politician in a position to flaunt his independence from the Qājārs. The inability of the Shahs of Iran to force any of the Afghan rulers of Herat to strike coins or to read the khutbah in their names from 1796 until the reign of Sayyid Muḥammad Khān, when it was done secretly, is a clear example of their lack of political control. This, coupled with their inability to appoint their own people to positions in Herat or to station troops there, substantiates the conclusion that Herat Province was not part of the Qājār state. The Qājār's presentation of titles to Yār Muḥammad Khān and his son was done after the Durrānī power struggle had taken place, and should be viewed as recognition of the fait accompli, and not as evidence supporting Qājār hegemony over Herat.

The Iranians attempted to demonstrate their claim to Herat, Qandahār, and Kābul by referring to their Durrānī

rulers as valīs (governors) or mīrzās (princes). These were political labels used by the Qajars to support their claim as legitimate successors to the Safavids. Their conferring of titles hardly reflected the actual political alignment on the eastern highlands.

The death of Muḥammad Shāh Qājār in 1848, and the revolt of the Āṣif al-Dawlah's son Ḥasan Khān Sālār in the same year, further strengthened Yār Muḥammad Khān's position in Herat. By siding with the distant Qājār court, Yār Muḥammad Khān helped prevent the creation of a rival Khurāsānī state, which would have been a threat to the Herati ruler, and which gained for him the necessary strength to expand to the north and east.

The policy pursued by the Iranian vizir Mīrzā Taqī Khān toward Herat between 1848 and 1851 proved to be little different from that of his predecessor Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqāsī, or his successor, Ḥājjī Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī. This shows that Qājār irredentist schemes were not based on a single Shah's ambition, nor were they the on-again-off-again policies pursued by inexperienced vizirs. Rather, the desire to dominate in Herat was a constant element in Qājār dynastic goals.

The 1853 "engagement" unilaterally issued by the Shah under British pressure, promising non-interference in Herat, later proved an impediment to Qājār irredentism,



and made a convenient casus belli for the British in order to maintain the status quo in Herat. The agreement favored British strategic interest, though to enforce it they had to break an article of the 1814 definitive treaty which forbade British interference in any war between Iran and the Afghans.

British arguments that Iran was following an "illegitimate" foreign policy only meant that Iranian foreign policy was not in the British interest. The policy of trying to gain power in Herat pursued by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh from 1851 through 1857, demonstrates the continuity of Iranian policy maintaining their claim to the province. At the same time, the takeover of Herat by Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay in 1856 and his refusal to say the khutbah or strike coins in the Shah's name repeated the strong anti-Iranian sentiments of previous Afghan rulers and the polity of Herat. His final downfall came at the hands of 'Isā Khān, who was less tolerant of the Shī'ah Iranian connection than his ruler. The constant attempts by the Afghans of Herat to obtain British assistance to counter the Iranian threat is another indication of their desire to maintain independence from the Qājārs.

Broken agreements and deception were tools used by the Afghans, the Iranians, and the British in order to pursue their own goals in Herat. The Shah of Iran's decision

to occupy Herat Province in 1856 was a logical outcome of Qājār irredentism. The campaign was better planned and resulted in the first Iranian occupation of Herat Province since the death of Nādir Shāh Afshār in 1747. The Iranians were only able to keep Herat for eight months, until the East India Company attack in the Persian Gulf forced them out. The treaty negotiated in Paris in 1857 by Farrukh Khān, Amīn al-Mulk, and Lord Cowley dictated the terms ending the Iranian occupation of Herat, but also kept the British from obtaining all the terms they had originally demanded. But what was pledged in Paris was easily circumvented in Herat.

The actions of the Iranian Ṣadr-i Aʿẓam, Āqā Khān Nūrī, especially his execution of Muḥammad Yūsif Sadūzay and his appointment of Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān Bārakzay as "Governor" of Herat were indicative of the Qājār's continued dream to control Herat. Even with the removal of Mīrzā Āqā Khān Nūrī by the Shah, Iranian policy towards Herat maintained its irredentist consistency.

Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān coined money in the Shah's name, and relied on Iran for financial support. Between 1857 and 1863 the Qājār dynasty of Iran had more control in Herat than at any time, except for the eight-month occupation of Herat (1856-1857). This continued interference was not due to Sulṭān Aḥmad Khān's desire to maintain a strong connec-

tion with Iran, but because of his inability to find a viable alternative. Sir Charles Murray's attempts to remove him from power, and the inability of successive British diplomats in Tehran to offer the Herati ruler any substantial aid, forced Sultān Aḥmad Khān to keep his relationship with Tehran.

The death of Kuhandīl Khān of Qandahār in 1855 and Dūst Muḥammad Khān's subsequent absorption of Qandahār Province, placed the Kābulī Bārakzay in a good position for a later attempt to capture Herat, which was one of the Amīr's lifelong ambitions. The ill-conceived capture of Farāh by Sultān Aḥmad Khān Bārakzay provided Dūst Muḥammad Khān with the necessary casus belli for launching an attack on Herat. With at least the acquiescence of the British, and the arms and ammunition they had previously provided, the Amīr was strong enough not only to take Herat, but to threaten the Qājār dynasty as well. The threat of British retaliation, the disastrous campaign against the Turkmens in Khurāsān in October of 1860, and a virtually bankrupt treasury forced the Iranians to sit by as Dūst Muḥammad Khān fulfilled his ambitions. By not helping Sultān Aḥmad Khān, the British in effect invited Dūst Muḥammad Khān to occupy Herat. British promises of support and Amīr Dūst Muḥammad Khān's death in Herat shortly after his capture of the city eased Qājār fears of

any invasion from the east.

Throughout the 67-year period of conflict between the Qājārs and Durrānīs for control of Herat Province, religion also was an important factor in uniting each group in opposition to the other. Wars launched by the Qājārs had the support of many of the Shī'ah 'ulamā of Iran. Ending the rule of the Sunnī Afghans in Herat was considered a religious act. Their campaigns at times had the support of various non-Afghan Shī'ah groups inside Herat. Likewise, the Afghan rulers attempted to rally their supporters under the banner of Sunnī Islam in the defense of Herat and the "true" faith.

The fact that the major rival Afghan groups were all of the same tribe compounded the problems of the Qājārs. Though from different sub-tribes, the rivals were all Durrānīs, and kept the vast majority of their kinship ties within the Afghan system. Every Sadūzay, 'Alikūzay, or Bārakzay ruler of Herat was closely related by marriage to other Durrānīs of Kābul and Qandahār. Thus they viewed their feuds as internal tribal matters. The Qājārs were viewed as non-Afghan, heretical Muslims, to whom they could turn for temporary succor. Once the threat disappeared to their particular position, however, they felt little guilt in casting off their unwanted ally.

The Russians had the least influence in Herat of

the four major protagonists. If anything, the Russians attempted to influence the Iranians not to undertake the 1856 campaign. The reasons for the constant Iranian attempts either to annex or control Herat were regional in nature and were pursued partly to enhance the shaky legitimacy of the Qājār dynasty. British opposition exacerbated the problem but was not its cause. Nor were either the Afghans or Iranians "pawns" in the "great game" for control of Central Asia. Very clearly, they were competitors.

The creation of the Durrānī sultanate after the death of Nādir Shāh Afshar, the growth of a nascent nationalism among the Durrānī Afghans, and the maintenance of a different political system from that of the western highlands under the Zands and Qājārs kept Herat separate from Qājār Iran. Nor did Herat become part of a Bārakzay state after the collapse of the Sadūzay Durrānī sultanate in 1818. It remained isolated in Khurāsān, seeking aid from anyone who would support its independent status. At the same time, Herat was in both the Qājār Iranian and Bārakzay Durrānī spheres of influence. Iran intermittently exercised a type of limited protectorship over Herat between 1842 and 1863, depending on Iranian power at any given time and a corresponding and simultaneous weakness of the various Afghan rulers of Herat.

## APPENDIX I

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(Inclosure 4.)

Autograph Letter from the Shah of Persia  
to the Sedr Azim.

(Translation.)

It is no doubt on account of the Minister for Foreign Affairs being sick that he has not yet seen the British Minister, or explained to him the contents of my autograph note to the former; otherwise the British Minister would not have written his last letter in the style he has.

After the return of the late Shah from the expedition to Herat, the authorities and Affghans of Herat tendered by authentic documents, in the presence of the British Minister, their homage and obedience, and conducted themselves, as in former times, as servants of this Government. The Persian Ministers, too, have acted in the way they ought to have done as protectors of its subjects, and they have, by openly and repeatedly bestowing upon them dresses of honour, decorations, and titles, and all manner of favours, made them sincerely desirous of fulfilling their duty as servants. Thus, the services rendered by the

APPENDIX I - (con't)

Zuheer-ood-Dowleh (Yar Mahomed Khan) during the rebellion by the Salar, had an European reputation; and now that the Zuheer-ood-Dowleh is dead, Syed Mahomed Khan, his son, and the people of Herat, are under the necessity of requesting assistance from this Government for the regulation of their own affairs. If we should be negligent in granting this aid, not only will it be contrary to proper government, and (the duty) of protecting our servants, but it will also give us a bad reputation among foreign Governments, and diminish the confidence of the people of Persia and Affghanistan in us. Setting aside these considerations, it is not unlikely that one of two things may happen--either Syed Mahomed Khan will acquire by his own means independent power, or one of the Khans of that place will, without being under any obligation to Persia, acquire a preponderance; and in either of these two events, the Governor of Herat will lose all hopes from Persia, and doubtless with tribes such as these, desirous of exciting disturbance, and those headstrong Affghans, this will give rise to trouble, bad conduct, and lawlessness, and create disorder in the province of Khorassan.

In short, you must either put the British Minister to the trouble of seeing you at your own house, or send him this autograph, so that he may be acquainted with its contents, and you will say, by the soul of the late Shah, I am

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heartily desirous that the friendship of the 2 Governments should daily become more firm. I shall not withhold in anything giving satisfaction to the British Government, and more especially in any matter having connection, though slight, with the honour and dignity of that Government. But in this matter of Herat I am bewildered. Let him show us what course to pursue so that our reputation may not suffer in this Government and in others, and in a country which hopes to receive favours and aid from us.

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Source: Great Britain, India Office Mission Records  
Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence,  
L/P&S/9/146 Tehran, enclosure in Shah-Şadr-i  
A'zam (January, 1852).



## APPENDIX II

### Inclosure.

Engagement of the Persian Government regarding Herat.

(Translation.)

15, Rebbel-oo-Sanee, 1269  
(January 25, 1853)

The Persian Government engages not to send troops on any account to the territory of Herat, excepting when troops from without attack that place; that is to say, troops from the direction of Cabul, or from Candahar, or from other foreign territory; and in case of troops being dispatched under such circumstances, the Persian Government binds itself that they shall not enter the city of Herat, and that immediately on the retreat of the foreign troops to their own country, the Persian force shall forthwith return to the Persian soil, without delay.

The Persian Government also engages to abstain from all interference whatsoever in the internal affairs of Herat, likewise in (regard to) occupation, or taking possession, or assuming the sovereignty or government, except that the same amount of interference which took place between the two in the time of the late Zuheer-ud-Dowleh, Yar Mahomed Khan, is to exist as formerly. The Persian

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Government, therefore, engages to address a letter to Syed Mahomed Khan, acquainting him with these conditions, and to forward it to him (by a person), accompanied by some one belonging to the English Mission, who may be in Meshed.

The Persian Government also engages to relinquish all claims or pretension to the coinage of money, and to the "khootbeh," or to any other mark whatever of subjection or of allegiance on the part of the people of Herat to Persia. But if, as in the time of the late Kamran, and in that of the late Yar Mahomed Khan, they should, of their own accord, send an offering in money, and strike it in the Shah's name, Persia will receive it without making any objection. This condition will also be immediately communicated to Syed Mahomed Khan. They also engage to recall Abbass Koolee Khan, Peeseean, after 4 months from the date of his arrival, so that he may not reside there permanently; and hereafter no permanent agent will be placed in Herat, but intercourse will be maintained as in the time of Yar Mahomed Khan. Neither will they maintain a permanent agent on the part of Herat in Tehran. There will be the same relations and privileges which existed in Kamran's time, and in that of the late Yar Mahomed Khan. For instance, if at any time it should be necessary, for the punishment of the Toorkomans, or in case of disturbance or rebellion in

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the Shah's dominions, that the Persian Government should receive assistance from the Heratees, similar to that afforded by the late Yar Mahomed Khan, they may, as formerly, render assistance of their own accord and free will, but not of a permanent nature.

The Persian Government further engages, unconditionally, and without exception, to release and set free all the chiefs of Herat who are in Meshed, or in Tehran, or in any other part of Persia, and not to receive any offenders, prisoners, or suspected persons whatsoever, from Syed Mahomed Khan, with the exception of such persons as, having been banished by Syed Mahomed Khan from Herat, may come here and themselves desire to remain, or to enter the service. These will be treated with kindness and favour as formerly. Distinct orders will be issued immediately to the Prince Governor of Khorassan to carry out these engagements.

The above six engagements, on the part of the Persian Government, are to be observed, and to have effect; and the Persian Ministers, notwithstanding the rights which they possess in Herat, solely out of friendship and to satisfy the English Government, have entered into these engagements with the English Government, so long as there is no interference whatever on its part in the internal affairs of Herat and its dependencies; otherwise these engagements

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will be null and void, and as if they never had existed or been written. And if any foreign (State), either Affghan or other, should desire to interfere with, or encroach upon the territory of Herat, or its dependencies, and the Persian Ministers should make the request, the British Government are not to be remiss in restraining them, and in giving their friendly advice, so that Herat may remain in its own state of independence.

(Seal and autograph of the Sedr Azim.)

Source: Great Britain, India Office Mission Records Secret and Private, unpublished correspondence, L/P&S/9/149 Tehran, enclosure in Sheil-Malmesbury (January 30, 1853) Engagement contracted by the Iranian government relative to Herat. Sadr-i A'zam-Sheil (January 25, 1853).

### APPENDIX III

#### Proclamation.

#### Foreign Department, Fort William.

November 1, 1856.

The Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council, having, under instructions from Her Majesty's Government, directed the assemblage of a British force at Bombay, for service in the Persian Gulf, deems it proper to make known the reasons which have rendered this measure necessary.

In the month of January, 1853, certain Articles of Agreement were concluded between Lieutenant-Colonel Sheil, Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of the Shah of Persia, and his Highness the Sadr Azim, or Prime Minister of the Persian Government.

By those Articles the Persian Government engaged not to send troops to Herat on any account, unless foreign troops--that is, troops from the direction of Cabul or Candahar, or other foreign country--should invade Herat. In the event of troops being sent, the Persian Government engaged that the said troops should not enter the city of Herat, and that, on the return of the foreign troops towards their own territory, the Persian troops should be immediate-

APPENDIX III - (con't)

ly withdrawn from the neighbourhood of Herat to Persian soil.

The Persian Government also engaged to abstain from all interference whatsoever in the internal affairs of Herat, whether "in taking possession, or occupying, or assuming the sovereignty, or governing, except in so far as interference existed between the two parties during the lifetime of the late Yar Mahomed."

And, lastly, the Persian Government engaged to relinquish all pretension to and demand for the coinage, or the reading of the "khootbeh," or any other acknowledgment of allegiance or subjection, on the part of the people of Herat, to the Government of Persia.

It was at the same time stipulated, that so long as there should be no interference of any sort whatever, on the part of the British Government in the affairs of Herat, the engagements contracted by the Persian Government as aforesaid, should remain in full force and effect. On the other hand, it was agreed, in the name of the British Government, that "if any foreign Power, such as the Affghans or others," should wish to interfere with or or take possession of Herat, the British Government, on the requisition of the Persian Ministers, would not object to restrain such foreign Power by friendly advice, "so that Herat might

APPENDIX III - (con't)

remain in its own state of independence."

While the British Government has faithfully and constantly adhered to the obligations which it accepted under the Agreement of January, 1853, the Government of Persia has manifested a deliberate and persevering disregard of the reciprocal engagements by which it at the same time became bound, and is now endeavouring to subvert by force the independence of Herat, which was the declared object of the Agreement in question.

So far back as December, 1855, the Persian Government, by an article in the Tehran "Official Gazette," announced its intention of dispatching a force to Herat, alleging that the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, the Ruler of Affghanistan, had been instigated by his "neighbours" to possess himself of Candahar; that having, with their assistance, succeeded in that enterprise, he meditated an advance upon Herat; and that an armed demonstration in the direction of Herat was required for the preservation of tranquillity in Khorassan.

This assertion that the Ruler of Affghanistan was instigated by his "neighbours" to occupy Candahar, or that he was assisted by them in possessing himself of that city, or that he received advice or encouragement from them to advance upon Herat, was--if by those "neighbours" the Brit-

APPENDIX III - (con't)

ish Government is indicated--wholly untrue. No such instigation, or assistance, or encouragement (direct or indirect), had been given by the British Government; nor, so far as the British Government is informed, had there been, when the assertion was made, any act on the part of the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan evincing a design to advance upon Herat.

Nevertheless, the Persian Government has executed its intention. Not only have Persian troops invaded the territory of Herat, although the contingency which alone could justify such an act has not come to pass, but they have laid siege to the city, and have interfered in its internal affairs; while the Government of Tehran has not only assumed the right to nominate the Ruler of Herat, but, in addressing the present chief of the city, has declared Herat to be Persian soil.

The siege of Herat has now been carried on by the Persian army for many months. Before its commencement, and during its progress, the unfriendly sentiments of Persia towards the British Government have been scarcely veiled; and recently, the movements of troops, in different parts of Persia, have indicated a determination to persist in an aggression which is as unprovoked as it is contrary to good faith.

The conduct of the Persian Government has been



APPENDIX III - (con't)

pronounced by Her Majesty's Government to constitute an act of open hostility against Great Britain. Reparation has been sought, but without success. The withdrawal of the Persian troops from the neighbourhood of Herat to Persian soil has been demanded, as a preliminary to the adjustment of differences to which the acts of Persia alone have given rise; but the demand has been evaded, and, according to the most recent accounts, a Persian army still invests Herat.

Friendly remonstrance having failed, and a reasonable requisition having been rejected or put aside, it becomes incumbent on the British Government to take measures by which the Persian Government shall be convinced that solemn engagements contracted with Great Britain may not be violated with impunity, and by which effectual guarantees against continuous breach of faith shall be secured.

To this end a force has been directed to assemble at Bombay, and will embark as soon as the necessary arrangements shall have been completed. The further operations of the force, after it shall have reached the Persian Gulf, will be guided by such instructions as the progress of events, and the policy of the British Government may demand.

By order of the Right Honourable the Governor-

APPENDIX III - (con't)

General in Council.

G. F. Edmonstone, Secretary to the Government  
of India

Source: Great Britain, Foreign and State Papers, XLVII:  
280-283.

APPENDIX IV

TREATY OF PEACE (PARIS):

GREAT BRITAIN AND PERSIA

4 March 1857

(Ratifications exchanged, Baghdad, 2 May 1857)

(Aitchison, Collection of Treaties...relating to India  
(5th ed.), 13:81-86)

ART. 1. From the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present Treaty there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland on the one part and His Majesty the Shah of Persia on the other, as likewise between their respective successors, dominions and subjects.

ART. 2. Peace being happily concluded between their said Majesties, it is hereby agreed that the forces of Her Majesty the Queen shall evacuate the Persian territory, subject to conditions and stipulations hereafter specified.

ART. 3. The high contracting parties stipulate that all prisoners taken during the war by either belligerent shall be immediately liberated.

APPENDIX IV - (con't)

ART. 4. His Majesty the Shah of Persia engages, immediately on the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, to publish a full and complete amnesty, absolving all Persian subjects who may have in any way been compromised by their intercourse with the British forces during the war from any responsibility for their conduct in that respect, so that no persons, of whatever degree, shall be exposed to vexation, persecution, or punishment on that account.

ART. 5. His Majesty the Shah of Persia engages further to take immediate measures for withdrawing from the territory and city of Herat, and from every other part of Afghanistan, the Persian troops and authorities now stationed therein; such withdrawal to be effected within three months from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty.

ART. 6. His Majesty the Shah of Persia agrees to relinquish all claims to sovereignty over the territory and city of Herat and the countries of Afghanistan, and never to demand from the Chiefs of Herat, or of the countries of Afghanistan, any marks of obedience, such as the coinage, or "Khootbeh", or tribute.

His Majesty further engages to abstain hereafter

APPENDIX IV - (con't)

from all interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan. His Majesty promises to recognise the independence of Herat and of the whole of Afghanistan, and never to attempt to interfere with the independence of those States.

In case of differences arising between the government of Persia and the countries of Herat and Afghanistan, the Persian Government engages to refer them for adjustment to the friendly offices of the British Government, and not to take up arms unless those friendly offices fail of effect.

The British Government, on their part, engage at all times to exert their influence with the States of Afghanistan, to prevent any cause of umbrage being given by them or by any of them, to the Persian Government; and the British Government, when appealed to by the Persian Government, in the event of difficulties arising, will use their best endeavours to compose such differences in a manner just and honourable to Persia.

ART. 7. In case of any violation of the Persian frontier by any of the States referred to above, the Persian Government shall have the right, if due satisfaction is not given, to undertake military operations for the repression

APPENDIX IV - (con't)

and punishment of the aggressors; but it is distinctly understood and agreed to that any military force of the Shah which may cross the frontier for the above-mentioned purpose shall retire within its own territory as soon as its object is accomplished, and that the exercise of the above-mentioned right is not to be made a pretext for the permanent occupation by Persia, or for the annexation to the Persian dominions, of any town or portion of the said States.

ART. 8. The Persian Government engages to set at liberty without ransom, immediately after the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, all prisoners taken during the operations of the Persian troops in Afghanistan, and all Afghans who may be detained either as hostages or as captives on political grounds in any part of the Persian dominions shall, in like manner, be set free; provided that the Afghans, on their part, set at liberty, without ransom, the Persian prisoners and captives who are in the power of the Afghans.

Commissioners on the part of the two contracting powers shall, if necessary, be named to carry out the provisions of this Article.

APPENDIX IV ~ (con't)

ART. 9. The high contracting parties engage that, in the establishment and recognition of Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls and Consular Agents, each shall be placed in the dominions of the other on the footing of the most favoured nation; and that the treatment of their respective subjects and their trade shall also, in every respect, be placed on the footing of the treatment of the subjects and commerce of the most favored nation.

ART. 10. Immediately after the ratifications of this Treaty have been exchanged the British mission shall return to Tehran when the Persian Government agrees to receive it with the apologies and ceremonies specified in the separate note signed this day by the plenipotentiaries of the high contracting parties.

ART. 11. The Persian Government engages, within three months after the return of the British mission to Tehran, to appoint a Commissioner, who, in conjunction with a Commissioner to be appointed by the British Government, shall examine into and decide upon the pecuniary claims of all British subjects upon the government of Persia, and shall pay such of those claims as may be pronounced just, either in one sum or by installments, within a period not exceed-

APPENDIX IV - (con't)

ing one year from the date of the award of the Commissioners, and the same Commissioners shall examine into and decide upon the claims on the Persian Government of all Persian subjects, or the subjects of other powers, who, up to the period of the departure of the British mission from Tehran, were under British protection, which they have not since renounced.

ART. 12. Saving the provisions in the latter part of the preceding Article, the British Government will renounce the right of protecting hereafter any Persian subject not actually in the employment of the British mission, or of British Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls, or Consular Agents, provided that no such right is accorded to or exercised by any other foreign powers; but in this, as in all other respects, the British Government requires, and the Persian Government engages, that the same privileges and immunities shall in Persia be conferred upon and enjoyed by and shown to the most favoured foreign government, its servants and its subjects.

ART. 13. The high contracting parties hereby renew the agreement entered into by them in the month of August 1851 (Shawal 1267) for the suppression of the slave trade



APPENDIX IV - (con't)

in Persian Gulf, and engage further that the said agreement shall continue in force after the date in which it expires, that is, after the month of August 1862, for the further space of ten years and for so long afterwards as neither of the high contracting parties shall, by a formal declaration, annul it; such declaration not to take effect until one year after it is made.

ART. 14. Immediately on the exchange of the ratifications of this Treaty, the British troops will desist from all acts of hostility against Persia, and the British Government engages further that as soon as the stipulations in regard to the evacuation by the Persian troops of Herat and the Afghan territories, as well as in regard to the reception of the British mission at Tehran, shall have been carried into full effect, the British troops shall, without delay, be withdrawn from all ports, places, and islands belonging to Persia; but the British Government engages that, during this interval, nothing shall be designedly done by the Commander of the British troops to weaken the allegiance it is, on the contrary, their earnest desire to confirm; and further the British Government engages that, as far as possible, the subjects of Persia shall be secured against inconvenience from the presence

APPENDIX IV - (con't)

of the British troops, and that all supplies which may be required for the use of those troops, and which the Persian Government engages to direct its authorities to assist them in procuring, shall be paid for, at the fair market price, by the British Commissariat immediately on delivery.

Source: J. C. Hurewitz, trans. and ed., The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics 1535-1914, 2 vols., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), I:341-343.



[illegible]

APPENDIX Y - Complete text of Āqā Khān Nūrī's letter.

APPENDIX V - (con't)

(Translation)

The eminent Possessor of glorious and excellent position;  
dignified and magnanimous; efficient and qualified,  
Holder of the rank of Premiership and valor; respected,  
kind, great and generous friend:

The peace and friendship treaty that was auspiciously  
signed in Paris between the two great Iranian and British  
states by their ambassadors, and their copies endorsed by  
the two glorious monarchs, were exchanged in Baghdād  
between the two sides' officials, thank God, settled down  
the miasma of bad feelings and restored the traditional  
friendship that had existed. The authorities of this sub-  
lime state desired full satisfaction from the attainment of  
the happy-ending objective. It is obvious that that emi-  
nent excellency who possesses good will and pure heart  
would be equally happy over this development. His Excel-  
lency the Emperor's Intimate, the State's Trustee, (and)  
this sublime State's Ambassador has given the details of  
the graciousness of H. M. the Queen and the sincere kind-  
nesses of that eminent Excellency expressed incidentally  
in various writings to this sublime state's authorities.  
This indescribably auspicious state of affairs added to

APPENDIX V - (con't)

the satisfaction of His Imperial Majesty Shahinshah, the patron of this friend (of yours), and to further strength of the friendly relations of the two states and added a new credibility to the sincere friendship of that glorious state. This friend (of yours) who always engaged himself in maintaining the friendship of this state and was extremely sorry for the emergence of sudden differences and ill feelings between us also fully delighted, especially in the heartfelt intentions of that eminent excellency that had been kindly expressed openly in an audience to his Eminence our Ambassador. In fact if thus far I found myself alone, due to certain circumstances, in my efforts at maintaining the friendship between the two states which caused me profuse sorrow, now I am certain that I have an eminent personality in your caliber as my partner and succorer who will not allow, contrary to the past, my efforts to be in vain. From the eloquent presentations made and adequate reasons adduced by His Excellency the aforesaid ambassador it must have been clear to that Excellency's pure heart that the lover of peace and good, H. M. the Imperial Benefactor, has dedicated himself to maintaining the traditional friendship of the two dignified Iranian and British states and never consented to an iota of damage to the edifice of this friendship. And, of

APPENDIX V - (con't)

course, this friend does not wish to mention again the aspects of these events that I have impressed on that Excellency. I henceforth expect and am optimistically hopeful that that Excellency will not withhold his full vigilance with respect to maintaining the conditions of friendship and solidarity between these two states, with the help of His Eminence, God and by the efforts of the authorities of the two states and under the prosperity exuding shades of glorious and powerful kings, this friendship will strengthen daily and I wish that (that friend) will believe in the good will and benevolence and friendship of this friend with respect to himself and that state and nation. You would always delight this friend by writing about auspicious conditions of relations.

10 Shahr-i Shuval 1273.

--Courtesy of Ghulām 'Alī Ayeen, Research Associate, Center for Afghanistan Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

APPENDIX VI

Letter from Palmerston to the Sadr-i A'zam

Copy Private

London  
Sept. 8, 1857

I am rejoiced to find from your letter that it is your desire and intention to cultivate in future the friendship of England, but I should not be deserving of your good opinion if I were to disguise from you the truth of my thoughts, and there are parts of Your Excellencies (sic) letter which compel me to speak frankly in reply.

Y. E. says that "until now out of various considerations you have looked upon yourself as alone & without assistance in your endeavours to preserve the friendship of the two gov'ts from injury," and you further say that you request me and entertain the firm hope that I shall hence forward give my full attention to "the observance of the rules of friendship and unity between the two gov'ts."

Now upon this I feel myself obliged to say that the war which took place between our two countries was not owing to any neglect on the part of the English Govt of the



APPENDIX VI - (con't)

rules of friendship and equity, but was occasioned solely and entirely by Y. E.'s own unfriendly conduct and by the violent hostility which Y. E. displayed toward England in both word and deed, and therefore so far from Y. E. was the main and principal cause of the cessation of that friendship,

I have no doubt that Y. E. in seeking a quarrel with England, believed that you were promoting the interests of Persia, and I am bound to suppose that Y. E. considered yourself as performing on that occasion the part of a true patriot, and this belief on my part strengthens my confidence in the future maintenance of friendship between the two govts and countries. Because the events of the war and the decisive victories obtained, the British troops must have shown and have proved to the sagacious mind and powerful understanding of Y. E. that the true interests of Persia are best promoted by peace & friendship with England. And that the sure result to Persia of war with England must be defeat and disaster. With this conviction strongly impressed upon your mind, Y. E. will I am sure, like a good Patriot, clearly see in what direction the welfare of your country lies, and you will direct your policy as Minister of your Sovereign so as to secure that welfare.

APPENDIX VI - (con't)

Therefore it is that knowing the high statesmanlike qualities which so eminently distinguish Y. E., I feel satisfied that the alliance between our two countries will rest henceforward upon the basis of national interest, which is a firmer foundation than the sentiments of individual members, however friendly and sincere those sentiments may be. With every wish for the health and happiness of Y. E. and with fervent hope that the reign of your illustrious master & Sovereign the Shah of Persia may be long and prosperous.

Palmerston

Source: Broadlands Mss., Palmerston Papers, MM/PE/7/2, Palmerston-Sadr-i A'zam (September 8, 1857).

# ABDĀLĪ AFGHAN TRIBE

## SUBTRIBES

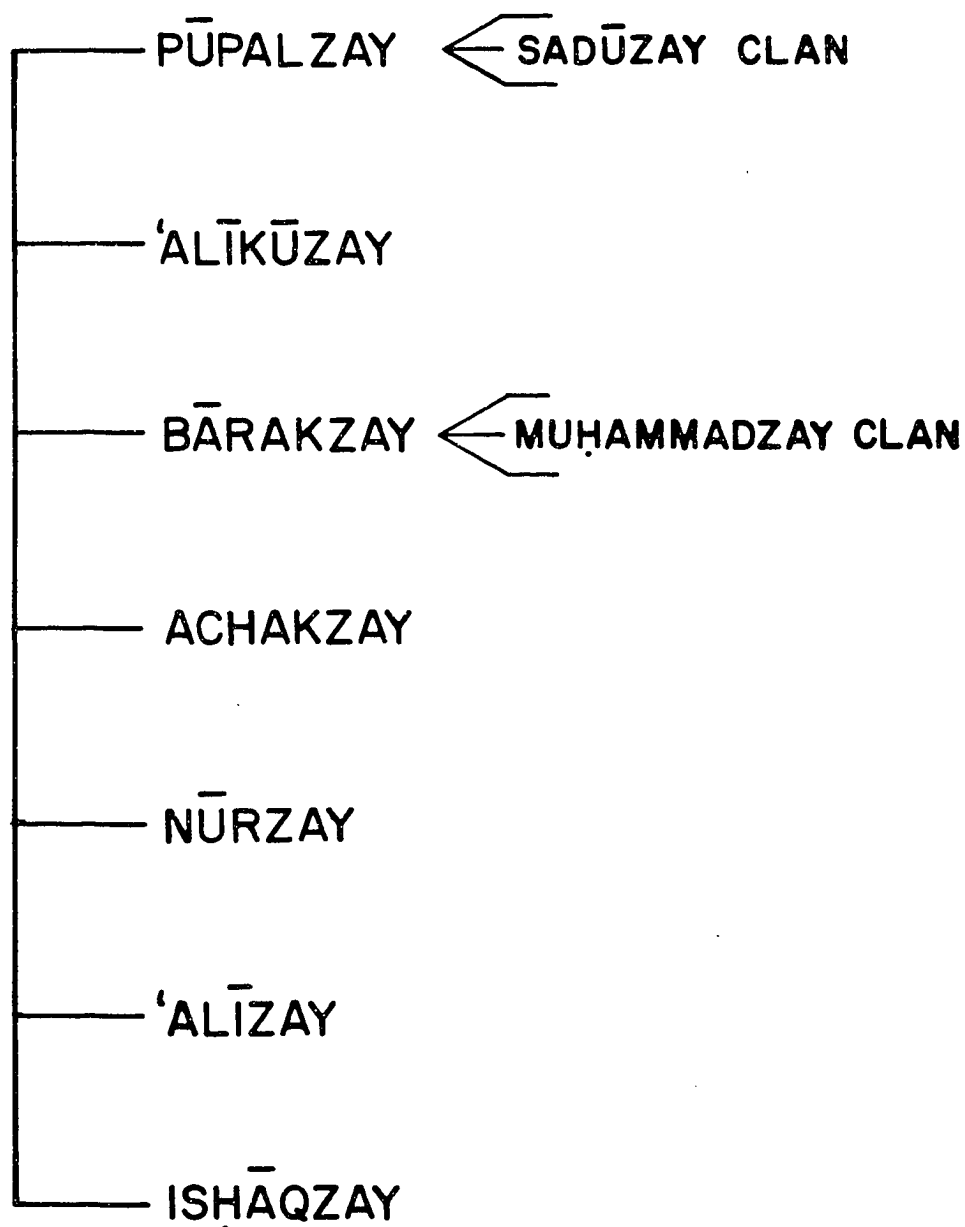


FIGURE 2

THE ROYAL FAMILY OF THE DURRĀNĪS  
1747-1842  
FIRST DYNASTY  
PŪPALZAY SUBTRIBE  
(SADŪZAY CLAN)

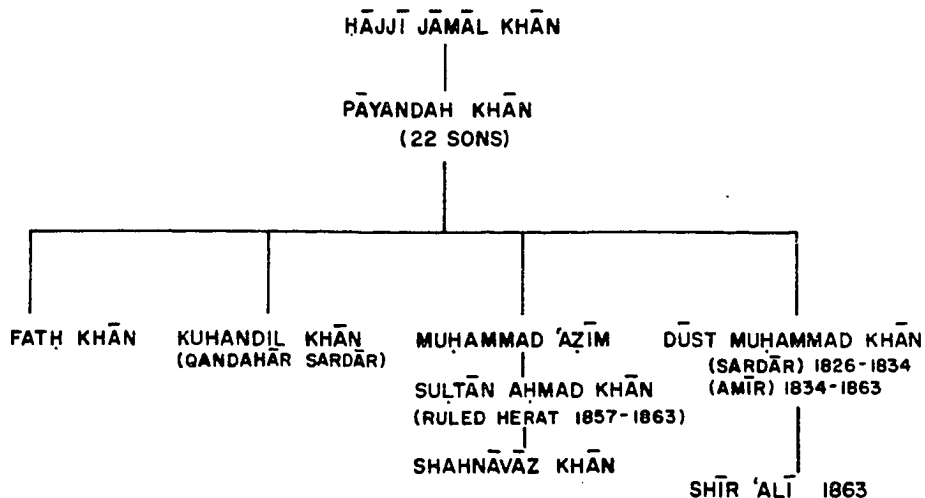
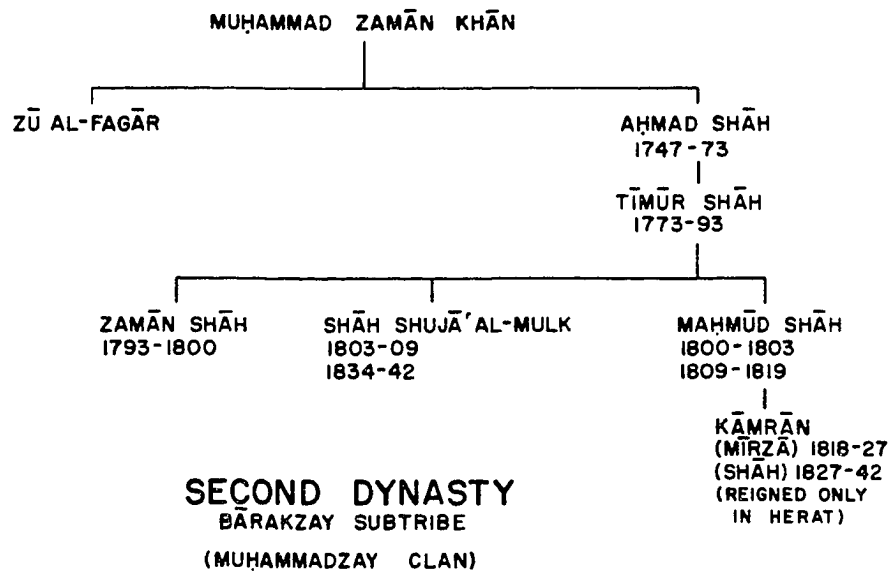


FIGURE 3

## AFGHAN RULERS OF HERAT PROVINCE

1800 THROUGH 1863

FĪRŪZ AL-DĪN SADŪZAY	1800-1816
FATH KHĀN BĀRAKZAY	1816-1818
KĀMRĀN (MĪRZĀ) SADŪZAY	1818
MAHMŪD SHĀH SADŪZAY	1818-1827
KĀMRĀN SHĀH SADŪZAY	1827-1842
YĀR MUḤAMMAD KHĀN 'ALĪKŪZAY	1842-1851
SAYYID MUḤAMMAD KHĀN 'ALĪKŪZAY	1851-1855
MUḤAMMAD YŪSIF SADŪZAY	1855-1856
'ĪSĀ' KHĀN BARDURRĀNĪ	1856
SULTĀN AḤMAD KHĀN BĀRAKZAY	1857-1863
SHĀH NAVAZ KHĀN BĀRAKZAY	APRIL 1863
DŪST MUḤAMMAD KHĀN BĀRAKZAY	MAY 1863
SHĪR 'ALĪ KHĀN BĀRAKZAY	1863

## THE QĀJĀR DYNASTY OF IRAN

1796 THROUGH 1863

ĀGHĀ MUḤAMMAD SHĀH	1796-1797
FATH 'ALĪ SHĀH	1797-1834
MUḤAMMAD SHĀH	1834-1848
NĀSĪR AL-DĪN SHĀH	1848-

FIGURE 5

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## VITA

David Charles Champagne was born in San Francisco, California on May 3, 1945, the son of Gustave C. and Rose M. Champagne. After completing high school in 1963 at Mooseheart High School, Mooseheart, Illinois, he attended San Jose State College, San Jose, California. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts in American history in June, 1967. He entered graduate school at the same institution and received a secondary teaching credential in June of 1968. That same month he married Mary Margaret Thomson, and the next month the two joined the Peace Corps. David and his wife spent three years as Peace Corps volunteers in Lashkar Gah, Afghanistan. Upon returning to the United States he entered California State University at San Jose, where he completed a Master of Arts in Asian history in August, 1972. In September of 1972 he entered the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin. Since 1978 he has been Assistant Director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He and his wife have three children: Tamim John, Margaret Rose, and Christopher Gustave.

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